

Relative Distances: Family and Empire between Britain, British Columbia and India, 1858-1901

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of PhD.

I, Laura Mitsuyo Ishiguro, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.
Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been
indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis explores the entangled relationship between family and empire in the late-nineteenth-century British Empire. Using the correspondence of British families involved in British Columbia or India between 1858 and 1901, it argues that family letters worked to make imperial lives possible, sustainable and meaningful. This correspondence enabled Britons to come to terms with the personal separations that were necessary for the operation of empire; to negotiate the nature of shifting relationships across imperial distances; and to produce and transmit family forms of colonial knowledge. In these ways, Britons ‘at home’ and abroad used correspondence to navigate the meanings of empire through the prism of family, both in everyday separations and in moments of crisis. Overall, the thesis argues, letter-writing thus positioned the family as a key building block of empire that bound together distant and different places in deeply personal and widely experienced, if also tenuous and anxious, ways.

The thesis follows a modular structure, with chapters that explore overlapping but distinct topics of correspondence: food, dress, death and letter-writing itself. Each of these offers a different lens onto the ways in which family correspondence linked Britain with India and British Columbia through intimate channels of affection, obligation, information and representation. At the same time, this multi-sited study also probes the relationships among these three places during the second half of the nineteenth century. Comparing the writing of families engaged with two very different sites of empire—one, an anxiety-ridden garrison state imagined as the ‘jewel in the crown of empire,’ and the other, a more distant and comparatively unknown settler colony on the ‘edge of empire’—the thesis develops a history of British imperial families that underscores the importance of both specific, local contexts and the wider, partially interconnected world of the British Empire.

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Acknowledgments

The 1887 etiquette manual, *Aids to Epistolary Correspondence*, reassures its readers that letters of thanks are among the easiest to write for they simply express the gratitude that is in one's heart (p. 11). Although I am not certain that it is always so simple to translate feeling into words, it is a great pleasure to attempt the feat here. There are many people whose generosity, expertise and encouragement made this thesis possible.

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Introduction

This thesis explores the entangled meanings of family and empire in the late-nineteenth-century British Empire through an examination of the personal correspondence of British families engaged with either British Columbia or India between 1858 and 1901. I argue that these letters—passing primarily between metropole and distant imperial sites—acted as a medium through which Britons both ‘at home’ and abroad navigated the meanings of empire and imperial places through the lens of family. More specifically, I investigate a range of ways in which family correspondence enabled Britons to come to terms with the personal separations necessary for the operation of empire; to define and negotiate the nature of shifting family relationships across and in relation to imperial spaces; and to produce ideas about colonial places and their relationships with Britain. In so doing, my thesis suggests, letters facilitated the key role of family as a building block of empire, a glue that came to bind together people and places in deeply personal and widely experienced ways. At the same time, these connections were always also positioned against the threat or simultaneous experience of disconnection, disjuncture and difference embedded in separated family lives.

By tracing these threads in imperial family correspondence, this multi-sited history also probes the complicated relationships among Britain, British Columbia and India during the second half of the nineteenth century. I am interested in the ways in which family correspondence linked Britain with British Columbia and India through intimate channels of affection, obligation, information and representation. In so doing, I also aim to explore the different ways in which Britons connected the metropole with an anxiety-ridden ‘jewel in the crown of empire’ and with a more distant and comparatively unknown ‘edge of empire.’ The unusual pairing of British Columbia and India in this analysis—two very different imperial sites, with very different relationships to the metropole—enables me to suggest ways in which British families operated in relation to these specific, local contexts and in the wider, partially interconnected world of the British Empire.

Beginnings

This project began as an exploration of death in British family correspondence from British Columbia and India. I was particularly interested in using death as a prism through which to think about the representations of family in the three sites through expressions of grief and mourning. Although the thesis has expanded from this original topic, its key research questions are still informed by similar impulses: how did relatives articulate or evoke connection with one another across imperial distances? In the process, how did they represent relationships between family, empire and specific imperial places? And how did their letters come to constitute personal and emotional links between metropole and colony?

These questions grow from my engagement with the diverse field often broadly labelled a ‘new imperial history,’ to distinguish it from (but also problematically relating it to) a traditional imperial canon. Influenced by feminism, postcolonial critiques and cultural studies, work by scholars like Antoinette Burton, Catherine Hall and Kathleen Wilson asserts the central importance of multiple, relational and intersecting identities in the operation of the British Empire, exploring the ways in which gender, race, sexuality, power and representation were produced and challenged in a range of imperial contexts.¹ In this framing, empire does not appear as a cohesive, unified project. Rather, this literature shows that it was constituted of messy, complex and contradictory projects, often focused on the discursive work of making and defining ‘colonisers’ and ‘colonised.’ These scholars have also challenged traditional approaches to the history of empire by putting metropole and colony within a ‘single analytic frame.’² Rather than seeing colonial projects as power and influence that emanated out from the metropole to shape a distant empire, they argue that these were mutually constituting sites; British

¹ Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Catherine Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire, A Reader: Colonisers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002); Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003); and Kathleen Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

² Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, ‘Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,’ in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 4.

identities and experiences were shaped by empire both at home and abroad, whether consciously or unconsciously so.³

In line with this thinking, I see family correspondence—in its flows of materials, emotions and obligations—as a key medium through which the meanings of metropole and colony were produced through one another. I am also influenced by this diverse and expanding field in three other key ways: in my use of intimacy, family and affective ties as a prism through which to think about imperialism; in my understanding of empire as an everyday experience lived both in the metropole and in distant imperial sites; and in my multi-sited framework that seeks to understand the relationships, connections and disconnections between local places and wider contexts of empire.

Intimacy

One significant segment of the new imperial history is concerned with the ways in which intimacies shaped colonial histories. Scholars including Adele Perry, Ann Laura Stoler, Elizabeth Buettner, Durba Ghosh and Margot Finn have shown that intimate relationships were not just a personal matter in imperial contexts, but rather were also fundamentally political, a key site in which the meanings of race, gender, power, culture and rule were produced, negotiated and challenged.⁴ In this light, empire might be seen as a ‘family affair’ or an ‘intimate project.’⁵ In this literature, the term ‘intimacy’ has been applied and interrogated to a range of

³ Catherine Hall’s *Civilising Subjects* is a particularly sustained and articulate model of this approach. It demonstrates that racialised and gendered identities—of both ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’—were made in complex and uneven ways in and between Birmingham and Jamaica. In such a framing, Britain appears as profoundly and crucially, if contingently and variably, shaped by empire. Hall, *Civilising Subjects*.

⁴ Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Margot Finn, ‘Anglo-Indian Lives in the Later Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century,’ *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33, 1 (March 2010): 49-65. See also Lynn Zastoupil, ‘Intimacy and Colonial Knowledge,’ *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 3, 2 (Fall 2002); Ann Laura Stoler, ‘Intimidations of Empire: Predicaments of the Tactile and Unseen,’ in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), especially 4; Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, ‘Introduction: The Politics of Intimacy in an Age of Empire,’ in *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire*, ed. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), especially 2; and Charlotte Macdonald, ‘Intimacy of the Envelope: Fiction, Commerce, and Empire in the Correspondence of Friends Mary Taylor and Charlotte Brontë, c. 1845-55,’ in Ballantyne and Burton, *Moving Subjects*, especially 103.

⁵ Buettner, *Empire Families*, 4; and Ballantyne and Burton, ‘Politics of Intimacy,’ 336.

circumstances including family conflict, the education of children and the long-distance maintenance of friendship, but it is most often concerned with the management and practice of mixed-race sexual relationships. Recently, some scholars have called for a continued expansion of historiographical attention to intimacies beyond the imperial regulation of sex. In their 2009 collection, *Moving Subjects*, Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton celebrate essays that stretch ‘the frontiers of intimacy beyond the sexual’ and speak to the ‘analytical possibilities of the intimate when it is not simply read as a synonym for conjugality.’⁶ Catherine Hall has also underscored the analytic potential of emotion, an aspect more difficult to access and grasp, but one with important implications for our understanding of the messy and deeply personal operations of empire.⁷ More recently, Ann Laura Stoler has asserted that empires were not only based on ‘knowledge-acquisition’ about colonised peoples, but also on the production of ‘affiliations, loyalties, and allegiances among empire’s own agents.’⁸

My thesis seeks in part to respond to these calls by exploring forms of intimacy that were not sexual, that included expressions of emotion and that were forged among ‘colonisers.’ I am interested in British family relationships, especially between adult siblings or parents and grown children, that were maintained across imperial distances. Overall, I contend that such relationships formed a key channel through which imperial places were given meaning and connected on a personal, intimate level both at home and abroad. At the same time, as ‘the colonial permeate[d] their lives,’ imperial separations, experiences and communications also became constitutive of family itself.⁹

Elizabeth Buettner’s work on British families in India offers one helpful model of this approach, in addition to outlining the familial context of mobility that shaped the lives of many of those studied in this thesis. In *Empire Families*, Buettner argues that family practices were implicated in the production of imperial identities in India. For the largely middle-class families engaged with the Raj, racialised and classed identities were grounded in multi-generational patterns of mobility between Britain and India; children were educated in Britain, but many returned to India to

⁶ Ballantyne and Burton, ‘The Politics of Intimacy,’ 9 and 23-24. Nonetheless, their introduction still contains significant slippage between ‘intimate’ and ‘sexual.’

⁷ Catherine Hall, ‘Commentary,’ in Stoler, *Haunted by Empire*, 461.

⁸ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 253.

⁹ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 265-66.

work or marry, while taking furloughs and eventually retiring in the metropole. In this analysis, such movements highlighted the differences between, but also the interconnectedness of the two sites in and through family life.¹⁰ In making this argument, Buettner calls attention to the importance of multi-sited perspectives for understanding the history of families in the empire: 'Restricting our attention to family life as lived on Indian soil tells only half the story of a mobile community and omits half the participants from further analysis.'¹¹

This thesis is strongly influenced by Buettner's approach, but it also seeks to build on *Empire Families* by exploring different kinds of relationships as they shaped and were shaped by imperial mobility. Buettner's attention falls mostly on the members of a family who actually moved back and forth between Britain and India, and especially on the relationships between parents and young children. Here, I want to know more about how other family relationships were influenced by Indian separations and Anglo-Indian identities, including those relationships with individuals who remained permanently in Britain. In many cases, these were adult members of a birth family: parents, grown children and siblings.¹² In addition, Buettner's work is a powerful exploration of what appears to be the peculiarly Anglo-Indian nature of family forms of mobility and separation. I am interested in a comparative analysis that will probe which elements of this history were grounded in an Indian context, and which ones might be identified as broader trends of imperial family life.

To this end, it has been important to understand the forms of family that manifested in the British Columbian context. Adele Perry's work on race, gender and colonialism has been particularly influential in this respect.¹³ In *On the Edge of Empire*, Perry explores the configurations of race and gender that shaped colonial society in British Columbia. More specifically, she explores the development of a white male homosocial culture and the practice of mixed-race heterosexual relationships in the colony, two elements that she frames as the 'sharpest symbols of what happened to

¹⁰ Buettner, *Empire Families*, 2.

¹¹ Buettner, *Empire Families*, 13.

¹² By looking at these relationships, the thesis also differs from other works on intimacy and empire in India. For example, Mary Procida and Durba Ghosh both focus on family relationships within India itself; the former is concerned with British marriages, and especially wives, among the ruling classes, and the latter explores the history of mixed-race families. Mary A. Procida, *Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India, 1883-1947* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); and Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India*.

¹³ Especially Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*. See also Adele Perry, "Is Your Garden in England, Sir": James Douglas's Archive and the Politics of Home,' *History Workshop Journal* 70 (2010): 67-85.

gender and race on this edge of empire.¹⁴ Perry then traces the work of reformers who sought to remake settler society by reconfiguring local forms of sexuality and family. In so doing, *On the Edge of Empire* examines connections and tensions between Britain and British Columbia through attempts to produce a ‘respectable’ society in the face of different forms of relationships that were present, common and acceptable in local colonial culture.

Although Perry’s focus is less explicitly on the family, her work provides a critical backdrop for my research, especially through her careful analysis of British Columbian forms of intimacy and the colony’s often-distant relationship with Britain. At the same time, my work branches off from Perry’s in several key ways. While her framing of a white male homosocial culture sheds valuable light on the character of colonial British Columbia, it also underplays the continued role of family connections for many men; although they may have lived without relatives in physical proximity, familial relationships could continue to shape their lives and interpretations of British Columbia through flows of communication, materials, affections and obligations. By examining the exchange of correspondence between Britain and British Columbia, then, I continue and extend Perry’s project to understand the links between colony and metropole through discourses on and of intimacy. In addition, I stretch her time frame into the first decades of Canadian Confederation to ask about the continued salience and sustenance of affective ties to Britain even after British Columbia was no longer a formal colony.

Finally, my approach to family relationships has not been shaped only by scholarly studies of imperial forms of intimacy. The literature on family, and especially middle-class families, in nineteenth-century Britain has also been a central part of this work. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall’s *Family Fortunes* and Davidoff et al.’s *The Family Story* were particularly helpful in their detailed study and broad overview of historiographical treatments of the nineteenth-century British family, respectively.¹⁵ However, these works rarely gesture toward empire as influencing either the broader cultural ideas of family or the personal experiences of individual families in Britain. *The Family Story*, for example, only comments briefly on familial and domestic tropes used to describe Britain and empire; the role of

¹⁴ Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 18.

¹⁵ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, rev. ed. (London: Routledge, 2002); and Leonore Davidoff et al., *The Family Story: Blood, Contract and Intimacy, 1830-1960* (London: Longman, 1999).

surnames in imaginatively linking even unrelated people around the world; the possibility of family networks in helping transient workers to establish themselves in the empire; representations of the empire as a ‘safety valve’ for the ‘worst of masculine restiveness’; concerns about eugenics and racial purity in relation to imperial events; and the impact of Indian and African childhoods on representations of domestics in Britain.¹⁶

John Tosh more explicitly explores the relationship between metropolitan and imperial spheres in his work on British masculinities.¹⁷ My concerns with the relationship between British families and imperial contexts differ from Tosh’s, however. Instead of focusing on the relationship between migration, imperialism and masculinity, I probe the ways in which family more generally—even absent or distant family—shaped imperial lives. Like Buettner and Perry, I am interested in the peculiarly imperial and local forms of family that were produced not solely in India or in British Columbia, but rather that grew out of connections between these places and Britain. To this end, I suggest that the expectations of family circulating in Victorian Britain played an important role in shaping the nature of relationships in the empire. This is not to say that families had experienced a particular, stable and self-contained kind of relationship prior to an individual’s departure to a distant imperial site, which then marked a separation as an aberration in a ‘normal’ family life. Indeed, many of the families in this thesis had experienced many generations of mobility and separation in the British Empire. However, as Buettner argues, the ‘myths of the “normal” family’ could be especially powerful for ‘those who failed to live up to these ideals.’¹⁸ In this sense, I am interested in how discourses and expectations of family in Britain might have shaped and been reshaped by imperial family correspondence: how did families assert particular kinds of relationships at a distance? How did they seek to replicate or adapt expectations and experiences associated with British middle-class family life? And how did they also produce and live out family patterns that were grounded in other traditions and places, such as Anglo-Indian cultures of mobility? How did the empire become a part of family life—and, in turn, how did family become a part of imperial life?

¹⁶ Davidoff et al., *The Family Story*, 95-96, 117, 118, 128 and 170.

¹⁷ John Tosh, “‘All the Masculine Virtues’: English Emigration to the Colonies, 1815-1852’ and ‘Manliness, Masculinities and the New Imperialism, 1880-1900,’ chaps. 8 and 9 in *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005).

¹⁸ Buettner, *Empire Families*, 113.

The everyday

My initial interest in correspondence about death lay in my assumption that there would be something special, distinctive or particularly revealing about the ways that families articulated connection and represented empire in moments of crisis or change. As I began my research, however, I started to see that the content, form and function of letters about death—although they did differ from other letters in some respects—did not exist outside of other familial epistolary practices. Rather, as a whole, they were deeply embedded in, reliant on and revealing of wider family strategies for communication, connection and relationship. While discussions of death and grief often spurred urgent and emotional claims to connection and togetherness, the backdrop that lent these letters power, meaning and context was the more common theme in correspondence: everyday, banal descriptions of imperial life and family relationship that brought empire into the lives and emotions of family members in Britain as well as in India or British Columbia.

Wanting to explore this tension further, I moved toward a wider examination of family correspondence in the British Empire—one that sought to engage with expressions of the mundane everyday as well as with moments of emotional rupture. Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose's collection, *At Home with the Empire*, provided a way into this issue for me.¹⁹ Unlike historians like Bernard Porter, who argue that British people in the metropole were generally not influenced by or interested in the empire, this collection makes a powerful case that empire came to be infused in and 'lived across everyday practices' in Britain.²⁰ In the process, it became 'part of the mundane' and 'taken-for-granted as a natural aspect of Britain's place in the world and its history.'²¹ In other words, 'empire mattered to British metropolitan life and history in both very ordinary and supremely significant ways: it was simply a part of life.'²²

The essays in *At Home with the Empire* explore this argument through a range of lenses from religion to consumption, education to literature. Reading and writing

¹⁹ Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, ed., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²⁰ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); and Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, 'Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire,' in Hall and Rose, *At Home with the Empire*, 2-3.

²¹ Hall and Rose, 'Being at Home,' 2 and 22.

²² Hall and Rose, 'Being at Home,' 30. Kathleen Wilson makes a similar argument that 'empire affected the most quotidian as well as the most momentous aspects of everyday life, cultural production, sociability, and identity.' Kathleen Wilson, 'Introduction: Histories, Empires, Modernities,' in Wilson, *A New Imperial History*, 21.

forms one of the book's main themes, including in Hall's exploration of Macaulay's *History of England*, Jane Rendall's examination of women's writing, and Cora Kaplan's discussion of fantasy, history and literature.²³ My thesis focuses on another way in which empire could become 'naturalised' and 'part of the ordinary' for those in the metropole, as well as in distant imperial sites, through the performance of writing and reading.²⁴ Letters written shortly after an individual's arrival in India or British Columbia could be infused with surprise, enthusiasm or disgust as they remarked on the differences of society, culture, politics, people and environment. However, later correspondence more often flattened these differences and their emotional resonance, instead focusing on mundane, daily, banal concerns. In the process, empire did not absent itself from the lives of correspondents, either in the metropole or in the colony. Rather, it remained indelibly imprinted onto their relationships through the very correspondence that failed to dwell upon it—imprinted as an unremarkable part of the possibilities, experiences and ideas of family life and communication.

Methods: letters

In this thesis, I take the letter as both source and subject of my analysis. In so doing, I follow the work of literary scholars and historians who have examined letters as texts, material objects and historical productions that reveal wider contexts through their content and form.²⁵ As Sarah Pearsall observes in her work on

²³ Catherine Hall, 'At Home with History: Macaulay and the *History of England*,' in Hall and Rose, *At Home with the Empire*, 32-52; Jane Rendall, 'The Condition of Women, Women's Writing and the Empire in Nineteenth-Century Britain,' in Hall and Rose, *At Home with the Empire*, 101-121; and Cora Kaplan, 'Imagining Empire: History, Fantasy and Literature,' in Hall and Rose, *At Home with the Empire*, 191-211.

²⁴ Hall and Rose, 'Being at Home,' 23.

²⁵ For example, Rebecca Earle, ed., *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); Amanda Gilroy and W. M. Verhoeven, eds., *Epistolary Histories: Letters, Fiction, Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000); Jean Barman, *Sojourning Sisters: The Lives and Letters of Jessie and Annie McQueen* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Erika Rappaport, "'The Bombay Debt': Letter Writing, Domestic Economies and Family Conflict in Colonial India,' *Gender and History* 16, 2 (August 2004): 233-60; Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Cecily Devereux and Kathleen Venema, 'Epistolarity and Empire: Women's Letters and the Construction of Colonial Space in Canada,' introduction in *Women Writing Home, 1700-1920: Female Correspondence across the British Empire*, vol. 3, *Canada*, ed. Cecily Devereux and Kathleen Venema (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2006); Charlotte J. Macdonald, 'Introduction,' in *Women Writing Home, 1700-1920: Female Correspondence across the British Empire*, vol. 5, *New Zealand*, ed. Charlotte J. Macdonald (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2006); Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber and Suzanne M. Sinke, ed., *Letters Across Borders: The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); and David A. Gerber, *Authors of their Lives: The Personal Correspondence of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2006). Sarah Pearsall's work on family letters in the eighteenth-century Atlantic

eighteenth-century Atlantic family letters, with a nod to Marshall McLuhan, ‘the medium is part of the message.’²⁶ With this in mind, I ask not only what can be gleaned from the content of correspondence, but also about the significance of its form, function and materiality, and about the role of the letter as a symbol as well as a practice in imperial family lives.²⁷

Letters were not windows onto the soul or onto an unmediated individual interior. Like all texts, they were produced in specific contexts for an audience and a purpose, with conscious and unconscious silences about aspects of imperial, family and personal lives.²⁸ With attention to these issues of inclusion, exclusion and representation, many studies have focused on the role of letters in producing, articulating and representing individual identities, or as Toby Ditz calls them, ‘plausible’ epistolary selves.²⁹ However, I suggest that this process was always inherently relational. Correspondence was a dialogue through which people sought to fashion ‘others’ as well as ‘selves,’ readers as well as writers, and importantly the relationships between these.³⁰ Even when letters were not answered and writers could only imagine how they had been received and read, the imagined dialogic nature of correspondence underpinned the ways in which relatives represented themselves, their imperial lives and their family relationships.

In this way, letters did not just represent family; they also constituted these relationships, to a degree, for those separated in the empire. Letters were their primary means of communicating with one another, and thus of maintaining relationships at a distance. As a result, letters worked as a kind of discursive and material performance of, among other things, family relationships and imperial

world, Jane Errington’s work on family letters from Upper Canada, and Charlotte Macdonald’s work on women, friendship and letter-writing were all extremely helpful in shaping my approach to family letters. In different ways, these three scholars consider the personal letter as a historically and personally contextual form that helped families to come to terms with changing relationships and identities across and in relation to imperial places. Sarah M. S. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Elizabeth Jane Errington, ‘Webs of Affection and Obligation: Glimpse into Families and Nineteenth Century Transatlantic Communities,’ *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 19, 1 (2008): 1-26; and Macdonald, ‘Intimacy of the Envelope.’

²⁶ Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 2. Chapter 2 of the thesis is a more lengthy discussion of the letter, particularly in this respect.

²⁷ Buettner also explores the place of correspondence in Anglo-Indian families, especially the letters written between parents and children. Like me, she underscores the importance of letters both in terms of their content (‘the thoughts and news written in them’) and as ‘a tangible reminder of an absent loved one.’ Buettner, *Empire Families*, 130.

²⁸ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 250.

²⁹ Toby L. Ditz, ‘Formative Ventures: Eighteenth-Century Commercial Letters and the Articulation of Experience,’ in Earle, *Epistolary Selves*, 62.

³⁰ Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 14.

identities. By performance, I do not mean that letter-writers mindlessly enacted and repeated a series of pre-existing scripts, nor do I mean that they were merely feigning relationship or affection. Rather, I suggest that these were texts through which the fluid, contingent meanings and forms of relationships were actually produced.

However, correspondence did not only construct meanings for individual relationships. Influenced by the 'new' cultural history, I see culture as produced through discourse.³¹ In this sense, I understand letters to be moored in wider cultural understandings of family and empire, acting as particular kinds of discursive performances that both constructed and reflected this wider historical context. Methodologically, I use close readings of these texts on their own, in relation to one another and alongside other sources. In so doing, I look to analyse the discourses of family and empire through which these texts were produced, and which they simultaneously helped to produce.

In undertaking this type of close reading, I have been inspired by the approaches recently articulated by Ann Laura Stoler in *Along the Archival Grain* and Sharon Marcus in *Between Women*. Their methods turn to elements of their chosen historical sources that they feel have been overlooked in an enthusiasm for working 'against the grain' and undertaking 'symptomatic readings.' For her part, Stoler expresses concerns that postcolonial historians and anthropologists have turned too readily to reading against the grain without understanding the 'grain' itself. Reading against the intentions of a text's producer necessarily asks us to identify those intentions; without reading 'along the grain' first, she suggests, we risk assuming that we already know the dispositions and concerns of the people whom we study. Stoler thus calls for scholars to read along the grain too, in order to explore the anxieties, banalities, affections and irrationalities that characterised the texts of colonisers. Here, she suggests, is a more fragmented and erratic emotional history of empire that challenges representations of colonial discourse and social relations of power as uniform, rational and consistent. *Along the Archival Grain*, in this way, is a provocation to a more attentive approach to the sentiments, uncertainties and intentions that are present in the archive.³²

³¹ For summaries of these developments, see Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998), especially 20-57; and Catherine Hall, 'Introduction: Thinking the Postcolonial, Thinking the Empire,' in Hall, *Cultures of Empire*, especially 10-16.

³² Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, especially 50.

While Stoler's approach responds to the methodology of many recent postcolonial histories, Sharon Marcus develops an idea of 'just reading' as a counterpoint to symptomatic reading, a similar dominant methodology in Victorian literary studies. Symptomatic reading seeks to reconstruct or understand the silences in a text, probing excluded elements that were suppressed by a writer who either did not or could not articulate them.³³ The idea behind this approach is that the 'true meaning' of a text is contained in these exclusions.³⁴ In *Between Women*, Marcus suggests that symptomatic readings have encouraged scholars to search so much for hidden meanings that they have sometimes failed to attend to elements that are apparent in the content of texts. Her methodology of 'just reading' carries with it many elements, but in essence the approach seeks to understand 'what texts make manifest on their surface.'³⁵ This is not intended to reveal a 'truer' meaning—rather, scholarly interpretations are always 'just' one reading of a text—but the approach does aim to do justice to the content and intentions that are 'present on [the] surface' of sources as well.³⁶

In these ways, both Stoler and Marcus push on the methodological trends of their fields by asking scholars first to interrogate what is apparent in their sources without rushing to read against them to find meaning. For me, these approaches have been valuable reminders of the analytic potential of the expressed intentions, concerns and assumptions of letter-writers. In this thesis, I have sought to explore the cadences and rhythms of family correspondence by remaining attentive to its content, its grains and its undulating surfaces. In so doing, the thesis traces letter-writers' articulation of the links between correspondence, family relationship and imperial places; their claims to affection and emotion; their repetition of daily banalities; and their anxious explorations of distance in moments of family crisis. Following the grain of correspondence in such a way, I suggest, reveals much about the ways in which many Britons explicitly positioned and used the letter as a central, personal and deeply emotional link to 'home' and family. This is not to suggest that the exclusions, assumptions and underlying discourses are not important. There are many silences in this correspondence that can and should be fleshed out in a reading

³³ Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 3.

³⁴ Marcus, *Between Women*, 74.

³⁵ Marcus, *Between Women*, 3.

³⁶ Marcus, *Between Women*, 75.

against the grain. For example, the comparative absence of indigenous people in much of the British Columbian correspondence and a certain level of disregard for the realities of military violence in Anglo-Indian letters could be subjected to a deeper reading than I offer here. However, I suggest that a close and ‘just’ reading of the personal, emotional and often banal content of family letters is a valuable first step as it unsettles and clarifies assumptions that we already understand the dispositions, priorities and concerns of colonisers in these two sites.

Methods: frames

In *On the Edge of Empire*, Adele Perry explores the history of British Columbia within a ‘broader context of European colonialism.’ Although her main focus is on discourses of race and gender as they were produced in British Columbia, she comments in her introduction—but does not elaborate—that the colony ‘had more common ground with the colonial societies of India and Africa than scholars have generally acknowledged.’³⁷ More recently, Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton’s collection on intimacy and mobility, *Moving Subjects*, focuses largely on the Antipodes and North America. They suggest in their introduction that these settler colonies depended on migration and ‘demographic domination’ as ‘instruments of colonization’—points, they argue, that made intimacy operate in a generally different way than in imperial sites like India, where power depended on fragile structures of force and threat rather than on sheer numbers and displacement.³⁸

These two different assertions raise significant questions for me about the relationships between Britain, British Columbia and India as they operated in a broad, partially shared but also locally differentiated world of empire: how did British family relationships operate differently in relation to British Columbia and India? And were there also common trends that characterised the intimate lives of separated families across the late-nineteenth-century British Empire? In order to examine these issues, I have developed a two-pronged framework that considers both comparisons and connections between the sites in question.

Comparison

On one level, this project is a comparative study of families engaged with British Columbia and India. In this sense, it seeks to understand the different

³⁷ Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 6.

³⁸ Ballantyne and Burton, ‘The Politics of Intimacy,’ 11.

articulations and performances of family as they were embedded in the contexts, practices, expectations and experiences of each site. By illuminating elements of distinctiveness and similarity, my comparative approach tests, clarifies and contextualises existing insular or inward-looking histories of family or imperialism confined to one place. In addition, such comparative work produces a more contingent, fluid and locally specific framing of British imperialism rather than, as Philippa Levine writes, ‘allowing all policy to be filed under a simple and homogenous heading of colonial rule.’³⁹

While comparison offers these advantages in complicating understandings of imperial families, it also involves some serious pitfalls. Pragmatically, comparison (along with other multi-sited approaches) demands a deep understanding of multiple sites. Conceptually, I am also concerned about the closed and contained characterisation of space encouraged by strict comparative histories, which reify sites in time and place in order to compare them. As Frederick Cooper warns, rigid comparative structures might force a historian to miss elements that fall outside of their parameters, while seeking to compare ‘entire histories—which do not stay still long enough... to make precise comparisons.’⁴⁰ In these ways, a comparison of British Columbia and India risks implying that these were self-contained, internally uniform and stable places.

In contrast to this framing, however, I understand space to make and be made continually from social relationships. In *For Space*, Doreen Massey elaborates such an idea of space as a ‘product of interrelations,’ multiple and ‘always under construction... never finished; never closed.’⁴¹ Within this conceptualisation, Massey frames place as ‘a particular articulation of those relations, a particular moment in

³⁹ Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 15. Similarly, Stoler seeks to address what is ‘particular to that time and place but resonant with practices in a wider global field.’ Ann Laura Stoler, ‘Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies,’ *Journal of American History* 88, 3 (December 2001): 830.

⁴⁰ Frederick Cooper, ‘Review: Race, Ideology, and the Perils of Comparative History,’ *American Historical Review* 101, 4 (October 1996): 1135. To a similar end, Deborah Cohen and Maura O’Connor express concerns that comparative history ‘substitutes static categories for an accurate depiction of time and place, it misses the movement that takes place beyond borders, it relies upon “orthodox visions” of national histories, and hence cannot challenge the conventional wisdom.’ Deborah Cohen and Maura O’Connor, ‘Comparative History, Cross-National History, Transnational History—Definitions,’ in *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective*, ed. Deborah Cohen and Maura O’Connor (London: Routledge, 2004), xvi.

⁴¹ Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 9.

those networks of social relations and understandings.’ Importantly, these relations are not contained within a ‘place,’ but rather ‘stretch beyond.’ Massey explains:

Such a view of place challenges any possibility of claims to internal histories or to timeless identities. The identities of place are always unfixed, contested and multiple. And the particularity of any place is, in these terms, constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counterposition to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections *to* that ‘beyond.’⁴²

This understanding of space and place challenges an approach to imperial history that follows a strict comparative structure. Instead of being flat, given and static entities that can be contained and compared to one another, imperial places were produced and navigated through relationships, including those forged in imagination and communication, and in the movement of people, material goods and ideas. Therefore, I need to consider relationships and mobilities within, across and between places, not simply bounded comparisons. In this sense, I seek an approach in this thesis that acknowledges that India and British Columbia cannot be seen as wholly distinct sites. Their narratives share the same time period, connections to the metropole, wider discourses and experiences of empire, and sometimes even the same families. Although family networks, communication and experiences were grounded in specific contexts, they were also continually shaped and reshaped by a dynamic process of interaction with Britain and elsewhere. Thus, the histories of British families engaged with India and British Columbia are not exactly parallel; told alongside one another, they make contact and diverge, moving in and out of each other’s scope and vision, while operating within a wider, partially shared narrative grounded in Britain and its empire in the late nineteenth century. As a result, it makes little sense to explore in strict comparison how family and empire worked similarly or differently in British Columbia and India, an approach that obscures both the connections between the sites and the concerns that could be so vastly different between contexts that they would evade such a contained narrative of comparison.

Connections and networks

In their introduction to *Colonial Lives across the British Empire*, David Lambert and Alan Lester call for scholars to stay alert to both the distinctiveness and the interconnectedness of imperial places in ways that respond to Massey’s more

⁴² Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), 5.

relational, fluid and contingent conceptualisation of space. More specifically, Lambert and Lester seek an analytic approach that probes the connections among people, places and events ‘in the ways that colonial relations had connected them,’ in the process linking places with one another and with the ‘general and universal.’⁴³ In recent histories of the British Empire, the idea of imperial space as ‘networked’ has been a powerful metaphor for understanding these contextual, contested and contingent connections. Generally, networks are framed as sets of channels along which people, materials, information, patronage and ideas flowed. Networks did not connect pre-existing and static places, but actively worked to create them and to give them meaning in relation to one another. In so doing, they facilitated the production and negotiation of imperial identities, practices and discourses that spanned and connected the British Empire—but always in localised and uneven ways.

Alan Lester’s work on imperial networks offers one of the clearest and most deliberate examples of this approach. In *Imperial Networks*, Lester argues that local colonial projects, discourses and identities in the Cape Colony were ‘forged not just within the Cape, or even within multiple colonies or the metropole, but across a network linking these sites together... [T]he two sites were knitted together in a global cultural and political fabric.’⁴⁴ In Lester’s approach, networks represent both material and discursive linkages that form and are formed by ‘a diverse and dynamic, but interconnected imperial terrain.’⁴⁵

Zoë Laidlaw’s work on colonial connections between Britain, the Cape and New South Wales is another important and careful exploration of the analytic potential of networked or interconnected approaches to imperial history. For me, *Colonial Connections* has been particularly helpful for thinking through the importance of individuals within the abstract notion of ‘family networks.’ Laidlaw highlights that networks and connections were not impersonal entities that existed outside of the people who constituted them. Rather, personal relationships, different kinds of ties, competing interests and other concerns could bring networks together, produce overlaps, strengthen connections, undermine them, or even fragment them

⁴³ David Lambert and Alan Lester, ‘Introduction: Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects,’ in *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Career in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. David Lambert and Alan Lester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 4-5.

⁴⁴ Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001), 5.

⁴⁵ Lester, *Imperial Networks*, 189.

altogether.⁴⁶ In this sense, ‘imperial networks connected people first, and places second.’⁴⁷ At the same time, Laidlaw underscores the simultaneity and ‘multiplicity of connections’ that made up networks in the empire.⁴⁸ As she writes, ‘very few networks were ever distinct: just as most individuals had a variety of identities... so they belonged to multiple sets of connection.’⁴⁹

Inspired by this scholarship, I understand correspondence as facilitating, flowing through and giving meaning to family networks that stretched across imperial space. In so doing, I do not want to suggest that family networks of correspondence were wholly isolated or distinct from other forms of colonial connections, although my attention here does fall exclusively on them. Family ties also interpenetrated other kinds of connections, including the overlapping but different networks of colonial governance, humanitarianism and settler colonialism, as explored by Laidlaw and others. In this sense, we might see family letters as one register in a multitude of interconnected selves, relationships and voices that constituted imperial relations. Exploring family correspondence thus illuminates one perspective onto the interconnected histories of imperial places—one which differs from but also complements studies that focus on other types of networks.

Thinking comparison and connection together

In his review essay of George Fredrickson and James Campbell’s work, Frederick Cooper makes a case for thinking both comparatively and about connection. In this case, he calls attention to the distinctiveness and the interconnectedness of southern American planters and Afrikaner farmers, suggesting that we should recognise the particularities of each, but at the same time must also consider that they saw themselves as ‘representatives of Christianity and civilization, linked by culture and values as much as skin color to the “Western world.”’⁵⁰ Cooper underlines the fact that these were not ‘two discrete “cases”’ to be compared, but rather were part of the same ‘immensely complicated tale of global transformation and struggle.’⁵¹ In making this point, he emphasises the value of thinking about

⁴⁶ Zoë Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections 1815-45: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), especially 14 and 35.

⁴⁷ Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 35.

⁴⁸ Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 13.

⁴⁹ Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 15.

⁵⁰ Cooper, ‘Race, Ideology, and the Perils of Comparative History,’ 1137.

⁵¹ Cooper, ‘Race, Ideology, and the Perils of Comparative History,’ 1135.

connection alongside comparative analyses, allowing the approaches to moderate and speak to one another without overstating their own implications:

There are risks of overemphasizing connectedness, of sweeping the particular under the global, of losing track of the importance of human agency and geographic specificity, of mistaking ideal types for historical realities. Holding apparently similar instances up against each other—seeing how different contexts, different actions by individuals and groups, different ways in which conflicts played out—can give a deeper appreciation of both the rootedness of history in place and time and the connections of places and times across the world... Comparison suggests the multiple possibilities, pathways, and dead ends that exist within a broader history. A global, interactive approach to history needs comparison, and comparison needs interactive and global analysis.⁵²

Taking up Cooper's argument, I have found networks and comparison, in tandem, to be a useful approach in this thesis. I seek to use these as interrelated ways of thinking historically about provisional, open-ended, shifting, claimed, unrealised and resisted relationships between places and people. In this case, 'comparison'—both implicit and overt—is mostly concerned with suggesting ways in which the contexts of India and British Columbia resonate with one another or do not, and why, rather than with imposing a fixed comparative structure. In this sense, I hope that comparison between British Columbia and India will offer new ways of seeing imperial sites, while attention to family networks will recognise that these 'places' were not self-contained and discrete, but rather were produced in dialogue with other places and wider discourses. I look to leave room for asymmetries between sites and to acknowledge multiple, complex layers of comparison, continuity and disjuncture. In practice, this means that the structure of the thesis seeks to make explicit the connections and disconnections that characterise a comparative but partially shared history of family in the British Empire. Some chapters emphasise concerns that resonated with particular frequency and intensity in certain places, while others explore the interconnected *and* place-specific nature of wider phenomena.

Mirrors

Historians are not objective analysers and commentators on past events, but instead are always inevitably entangled in the stories that they write. The process of researching and writing history is one that both inscribes itself onto the researcher

⁵² Cooper, 'Race, Ideology, and the Perils of Comparative History,' 1135.

and is inscribed by them. For me, this was at times a deeply uncomfortable project. My topic, evidence and approach asked me above all to immerse myself in the intimacies and anxieties of those who wielded weapons of all sorts against indigenous people in a project to dominate land, cultures and lives. Reading their personal letters, though, it became impossible to ‘caricature’ them simply as ‘colonisers,’ as only ‘avatars of ideas and ideologies.’⁵³ Rather, their family correspondence made them fragile, uncertain, sometimes well-meaning, and ultimately *human* people. Here I found letters that disquietly, awkwardly and insistently held a mirror up to myself, that told stories that were uncomfortably familiar—even seemingly parallel to my own.

On both sides, my family history might be read as one of mobility and separation, as generation after generation has moved around the world over the past century and a half. The Murdoch branch of my mother’s family situates me, partially at least, within a narrative of British migration that links the three sites in this thesis. In 1850, Henry Hunter Murdoch, my great-great grandfather, sailed from England to Calcutta to work for Ewing & Company, a textiles firm. Fifteen years later, he was able to retire to Tunbridge Wells. His son Ellis later went to Calcutta to carry on the business, but after a falling-out with the company, he too returned to Tunbridge Wells where my grandfather, David, was born in 1912. The following year the family—Ellis, his wife (Katharine) Marjorie, and their then-three children Peter, Henry and David—set sail for British Columbia, where they would settle in Kelowna.⁵⁴

In part as a result of the opportunities available to the Murdochs through imperial circuits of migration, then, I am a British Columbian. I was born and raised in Victoria, a city that continues to market itself as ‘more English than the English,’ priding itself in the notion that it might be a lingering bastion of imperial ties and contrived English identity.⁵⁵ At the same time, it is also a place that continues to struggle with the legacies and contemporary realities of colonialism. The only province in Canada without treaties with indigenous people in the vast majority of its

⁵³ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 255; and Lambert and Lester, ‘Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects,’ 17.

⁵⁴ Henry Hunter Murdoch, Calcutta journal and ‘My History’ (memoirs); and David Carruthers Murdoch, memoirs, all in private collections.

⁵⁵ See Terry Reksten, *More English than the English: A Very Social History of Victoria* (Victoria: Orca, 1986); and Kenneth Lines, ‘A Bit of Old England: The Selling of Tourist Victoria’ (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1972).

territory, in many ways British Columbia superficially celebrates its First Nations cultures while turning its back on very real social, political, cultural and economic issues.

Moving from this place to the London ‘metropole’ to undertake my doctoral work in 2008, I found a city layered so differently with the history of empire. Learning to live in and with London has been a process that I have undertaken alongside my research. Personal anxieties about belonging have woven themselves through the anxieties expressed by the people whom I have studied, as they also moved between places that they called home. Like so many in the British Empire, I have encountered the dual dis-location of trying to occupy two places at once, but not fully inhabiting either. Moving between places—in body or in mind—has not been easy: I have felt discomfort and displacement in London, but so too have I felt the unsettling possibility of belonging ‘here,’ of not-belonging ‘there,’ and ultimately of losing the clarity and certainty that a British Columbian home has held for me.

While these were issues that I have sought to understand on an intellectual level throughout my academic career, they were new and unsettling experiences in personal practice. I was left feeling raw and exposed in the archives more than once, feeling a sharp pang of recognition in the letters of those far from home and family, indeed far from certain of what home was. The possibilities of entangling myself too deeply in the subject were perhaps never clearer than the morning I spent in the British Library reading the Beveridge family’s letters about the death of their dog, Pindar, in Culross when Henry and Allie were in India. My own family dog, Kobi, had died in Victoria the night before and it was impossible not to read into this unusual correspondence my own devastation at my absence. More generally, I have thought critically and self-consciously about the relationship between the letters of imperial families and my nightly emails to my mother in Victoria; between historical anxieties about changing family relationships at a distance and the significant differences in the ways that I communicate with my sisters when we are not in the same city; and between the absences in archived family correspondence and my relationship with my father, who is too often left out of the exchange of digital communication in my family but who is no further from my thoughts as a result.

My research questions did not consciously originate with an interest in dissecting my personal story, but I have necessarily researched and written with an awareness that the history that I produce here echoes in me, and I echo in it. How

was I to reconcile a critical colonial approach with such deeply and uncomfortably felt connections with men and women who performed the work of empire and dispossession? How was I to place myself in this story? And how could I read the sources with an appreciation of my relationship to them—but without losing myself in that?

Ann Laura Stoler's *Along the Archival Grain* arrived at a critical moment for me with its explicit exploration of similar concerns. Here, Stoler elaborates an idea of what she calls the 'dispositions of disregard.' This concept is intended primarily to refer to the 'psychological and political machinations it takes to look away for those who live off and in empire,' the 'studied inattentiveness to the conditions around them,' and the 'contrived ignorance' of colonisers to the implications of empire.⁵⁶ However, Stoler suggests that the 'dispositions of disregard' might also encompass what 'many of us might find ourselves inadvertently doing now.'⁵⁷ Writing about the anxious and intimate family lives of colonisers—a history grounded in personal stories that might evoke uncomfortable sympathies in a contemporary context—has been a project that many have subjected to a careful looking-away:

If hagiographies are stuffed with personal letters, critical colonial histories are usually not—perhaps because of the sympathies they invoke, the shock of recognition, the disquiets they inspire. Or perhaps it is the 'flitting glance' of embarrassed familiarity that turns us away.⁵⁸

Stoler situates her work in that very 'flitting glance,' arguing that there is something critically important in the anxiety of recognition that should be probed instead of passed by. As such, she seeks to complicate 'the *flat interiorities* commonly attributed to those with whom we do *not* sympathize, politically or otherwise.'⁵⁹ In so doing, Stoler looks to shape a kind of colonial history that re-inserts affect, regard and discomfort on the part of colonisers, and on the part of historians.

In the process of writing this thesis, I too have sought to remain attentive to my inclinations and disinclinations to look away from the subject at hand. Part of my concern with the mundane expressions of family relationship is grounded in my interest to probe the very places in correspondence that are perhaps most familiar. While I might be uncomfortable with the apparent banality of imperialism and with a

⁵⁶ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 246, 51 and 247.

⁵⁷ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 51-2.

⁵⁸ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 274.

⁵⁹ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 238.

sense of self-recognition in the letters, it is in these very descriptions of emotion and the everyday that I can understand more about the ways in which empire became taken for granted and a part of personal lives that were lived out ‘at home’ and abroad. Pushing on my discomfort and affections, then, I have tried to un-flatten the ‘interiorities’ of the men and women who did the work of empire, not in order to evoke sympathy or disgust for them, but to understand the complex and polyvalent ways that empire became a personal and family concern, an affair of the heart with all its uncertainties and irregular beats.

Scope and contributions

The time frame of this thesis begins with the 1858 imposition of formal British rule in both British Columbia and India, as the Colonial Office and the India Office dismantled joint-stock company monopolies during a year of tumult and challenge. The thesis ends in 1901 with the death of Queen Victoria, the end of the Victorian era and the turn of the twentieth century. These decades, while beginning with instability and threats to the British presence in both sites, generally span a period of expansion and growing stability for British families engaged with either place as British Columbia and India were increasingly framed as accessible for respectable, white, middle-class families—or at least for those who lived out appropriate practices for the particular environment and society in which they found themselves.

The thesis focuses on the correspondence of the largely middle-class families who chose to write letters, whose letters generally travelled between Britain and either British Columbia or India, and whose letters have been preserved and archived.⁶⁰ While it is my main focus, I also consider this correspondence alongside other sources such as personal papers (including diaries, memoirs and non-family letters) and a range of other evidence (including newspapers, fiction and photographs). These provide context for thinking about the particular role of family letters by highlighting the specificities of its form, function and content. These sources also give context to the lives and concerns of the individual families in question, especially by illustrating some of the information that was absent or underplayed in their letters.

⁶⁰ The character of these families and archives will be explored further in the next chapter.

Overall, my thesis aims to deepen historical understandings of imperial families, and the place of intimate, personal networks of communication in making empire work. My focus on correspondence sheds new light onto a different kind of family relationship than is usually explored in the context of empire, emphasising the continuing salience of birth families and distant relatives long into adulthood and physical separation. In addition, the thesis seeks to challenge or complicate narratives of family and empire by bringing British Columbia, India and Britain into the same frame. Much of the literature on family and empire focuses on the Indian context, but there is comparatively little understanding of how Anglo-Indian forms of family relationships might be compared or connected to other family experiences in the empire. Instead of simply looking elsewhere to understand another localised form of family, I hope to unsettle assumptions and clarify understandings of what might have been representative of imperial family experiences by looking at India and British Columbia together.

British Columbia poses a particularly evocative counterpoint to India. As the next chapter will demonstrate, British Columbia and India were vastly different kinds of imperial sites, with very different roles in relation to Britain and the empire in the second half of the nineteenth century. Many comparative or multi-sited histories of empire tend to select sites that were broadly similar—two settler colonies, for example.⁶¹ The combination of a tenuous and distant settler colony on the ‘edge of empire’ and the ‘jewel’ of a garrison state, then, is unusual. It is also fruitful, as it gestures toward significant differences and, sometimes, the overarching similarities or uniformity of epistolary family practices across these different sites. By thinking British Columbia and India together, in other words, the thesis aims for a nuanced consideration of both localised forms of family relationships and a broader, shared pattern of family across the empire.

The thesis also makes an important contribution to the largely insular historiography of British Columbia by situating it in a multi-sited study of the British Empire. In 2001, Adele Perry claimed that ‘to reckon with British Columbian history as colonial history goes against the grain of much popular and scholarly tradition.’⁶²

⁶¹ For two recent examples, see Lisa Chilton, *Agents of Empire: British Female Migration to Canada and Australia, 1860-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); and Penelope Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19th-Century Pacific Rim Cities* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010).

⁶² Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 6.

Her work has led a movement of research addressing this issue, but the relationship between British Columbia and a wider British world still largely remains a lacuna in the historiography. To this day, Perry's work remains the primary bridge between the fields, read by historians of British Columbia and historians of the British Empire.⁶³ By asserting the significance of British ties and imperial mobility in shaping British Columbia during the late nineteenth century, my thesis extends this project of understanding how British Columbia was produced from personal relationships with other places, particularly within the British imperial world.

My thesis also contributes to the historiography of family in Britain by emphasising that this was not a self-contained history. Rather, for many families, affective ties and familial obligations stretched beyond the borders of the nation and became intimately entwined in the project of empire, if not always in remarkable ways then at least in the increasingly ubiquitous experience of having relatives living in imperial places. In exploring this point, I demonstrate yet another way in which the histories of metropole and colony were entangled in one another, connected by flows of people, letters, emotions and materials that produced ideas about empire and place in the process.

The letters studied here are generally not a new body of evidence. Both the British Columbia Archives and the India Office Private Papers have been used extensively by scholars interested in the local and personal forms of nineteenth-century life in both sites. It is in part my emphasis on the mundane and everyday elements of these letters that distinguishes my work from much of this literature. Family letters were not always explicitly engaged with negotiating the meanings of

⁶³ Historical geographer Cole Harris's recent work has begun to address questions of colonialism, though is rarely linked to a wider literature on empire and a 'British world,' nor is it read extensively by scholars outside of the British Columbian field. See Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997); and Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002). Articles by Jeremy Mouat and J. F. Boshier have situated Vancouver Island in a political context of British imperialism. Jeremy Mouat, 'Situating Vancouver Island in the British World, 1846-49,' *BC Studies* 145 (Spring 2005): 5-30; and J. F. Boshier, 'Vancouver Island in the Empire,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33, 3 (2005): 349-68. Adele Perry's body of work remains the primary exception, however. In addition to the previously mentioned works, see Adele Perry, 'The State of Empire: Reproducing Colonialism in British Columbia, 1849-1871,' *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 2, 2 (Fall 2001); Adele Perry, 'Whose World was British? Rethinking the "British World" from an Edge of Empire,' in *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures*, ed. Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw and Stuart Macintyre (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2007), 133-52; and Adele Perry, 'Nation, Empire and the Writing of History in Canada in English,' in *Contesting Clio's Craft: New Directions and Debates in Canadian History*, ed. Christopher Dummitt and Michael Dawson (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2009), 123-40.

colonial power, race, sexuality, difference and health, the more commonly examined topics, but were simultaneously also about articulating anxieties, joys and affective ties that—while revealing of discourses on empire—were clearly also wielded against diverging family lives in order to claim connections across personal separations. In addressing these elements of correspondence, the thesis contributes to a recently expanding body of work which suggests that personal letters offer a different but significant perspective on the history of empire.⁶⁴ Stoler suggests, for example, that by looking at the ‘lettered lives’ of colonisers, we might be able to explore elements of imperial histories that ‘[elude] official chartings.’⁶⁵ In this thesis, I argue that personal letters facilitated networks of information, ideas and affections that made empire possible and sustainable; in so doing, they did not just reveal a different side of empire, but they worked to constitute it.

Summary of chapters

The thesis follows neither a linear chronological history nor a strict comparative structure based on geography. Overall, I find few significant chronological differences in the ways that families and letters produced imperial spaces, networks and identities from the late 1850s to the turn of the twentieth century. Instead, the thesis follows a more modular structure, each chapter concerned with a theme that overlaps with and pulls apart from the others in an interwoven history of family correspondence in the British Empire.

The chapter that follows this introduction, ‘Setting the Scene,’ provides background and context for the rest of the thesis. It explores the history of the family in Victorian Britain, then outlines the contexts of late-nineteenth-century British Columbia and India. The chapter also introduces the kinds of families engaged with each site.⁶⁶ Finally, ‘Setting the Scene’ also discusses the role of the colonial archive in my selection of the families and sources considered in the thesis.

The four chapters that follow ‘Setting the Scene’ each focus on a specific topic of correspondence: letter-writing itself, as well as food, dress and death. These acted as lenses through which Britons negotiated separated family and imperial lives. In the process, they highlighted the distinctive and entangled relationships among

⁶⁴ See especially Rappaport, ‘The Bombay Debt’; and Macdonald, ‘Intimacy of the Envelope,’ 95.

⁶⁵ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 242.

⁶⁶ Further biographical notes on key individuals and families are included in the two appendices.

distance, place, family and empire as they resonated in different ways in British Columbia and India.

The first of these chapters explores the place of letter-writing in British families separated between Britain and either British Columbia or India. In this chapter, I argue that, through letter-writing, Britons were able to articulate and transmit changing meanings for family, empire and specific imperial places. More specifically, in the face of distance, difference and divergence, relatives claimed connections and relationships by linking the letter with conceptions of space, time and familial duty. Each of these strategies enabled correspondents to negotiate complex relationships between family, empire, metropole and colony.

While letters connected families in these ways, broadly similarly in British Columbia and India, certain topics of correspondence took on different kinds of importance in each place. The next two chapters are concerned with the ways in which letter-writers discussed colonial ‘everydays’ in relation to the family, using them to give meaning to life in British Columbia or India, and to weave these meanings into changing family relationships. Food, the topic of the first of these chapters, appeared with particular intensity and frequency in correspondence sent from British Columbia, where most Britons were single men attracted to gold rushes or work in resource industries. Here, they had to learn to obtain and cook local foods for themselves. In this context, settlers had to negotiate and rework assumptions about gendered practices of food preparation and family experiences of sharing meals. Letters about this process offered families a strategy for making sense of life in British Columbia, for exploring the impact of separation and place on their relationships, and for making connections—however tenuous—across the distances of empire.

Similarly place-dependent anxieties were apparent in Anglo-Indian letters about dress and appearance, the topic of the next chapter. In India, dress and appearance were mobilised as critical visual markers of similarity and difference, inclusion and exclusion, identity and status. Following the Rebellion of 1857, Anglo-Indian families were even more concerned with marking their bodies as respectable, white and British—far more so than in British Columbia, where discourses on difference operated in other ways. Taking up these anxieties, this chapter examines the place of dress in Anglo-Indian correspondence, as letter-writers linked the topic with new meanings of family identity and respectability in the Indian context.

The final chapter moves from the everyday concerns of food and dress to a moment of emotional rupture in family life, examining the topic of death in both Anglo-Indian and British Columbian correspondence. Death posed a challenge to families in a number of ways, not least by reminding separated relatives of the distances between them, both in life and in death. With physical proximity an impossibility for grieving relatives, correspondence offered a medium through which to rework relationships, to claim connections and to incorporate distance into mourning. In so doing, families used letters to enact both place-specific and more broadly shared epistolary practices of condolence and grief.

Overall, the thesis demonstrates that—in connected but different ways—Britons involved with British Columbia and India produced correspondence that constituted and facilitated family as a significant network in the late-nineteenth-century British Empire, both in everyday separations and in moments of crisis. In their form, content and symbolism, letters made the empire possible and sustainable, a place for and of family. These sources reveal more of the anxious and fractured, but also the mundane and naturalised worlds in which Britons moved: imperial and epistolary spaces that simultaneously marked connection and disconnection between people and between places. From this perspective, empire does not appear as a cohesive political, economic, military, social or cultural project in the colonies, but rather as individual and collective family lives written, consumed, embodied and lost in and between places.

A note on terminology and transcription

Throughout this thesis, I use the term ‘Anglo-Indian’ to describe families who were engaged with the Raj and who understood themselves as white and British, particularly those of the middle and ruling classes who maintained close personal or imagined links with the metropole. Although the term foregrounds Englishness in its prefix, I use it to encompass those from other parts of Britain as well, as it was used by the community itself during the period.⁶⁷ In general, I have used the nineteenth-century versions of place names. I distinguish between the separate colonies of

⁶⁷ A significant shift in the usage of the term ‘Anglo-Indian’ occurred in the early twentieth century. The 1911 Census of India applied it to people of mixed European and Indian descent, who had previously been known as ‘Eurasians.’ For more on the debates around this nomenclature, see Buettner, *Empire Families*, 12-13.

Vancouver Island and British Columbia when appropriate, but otherwise the term 'British Columbia' encompasses both, either as a united colony or as a province.

I have endeavoured to transcribe quotations from letters with their original spelling and punctuation, and I only note the errors of letter-writers with editorial insertions (indicated with square brackets) when the meaning is unclear. All emphases are from the original sources.

Chapter 1. Setting the Scene: Families in Nineteenth-Century Britain, British Columbia and India

The family was a social and economic unit at the heart of nineteenth-century British life. Operating as a network of ‘blood, contract and intimacy,’ it offered forms of mutual support, affection and obligation.⁶⁸ Relationships were shaped by widely circulated ideals grounded in Judeo-Christian values and British legal traditions. Through these, the family organised property, capital and labour; contributed to identity formation; and structured gender and generational relations both within and across its boundaries. At the same time, the family was always a historically specific set of relations grounded in the expectations, structures and possibilities of a given context. For the individuals studied in this thesis, the contexts of nineteenth-century Britain, British Columbia and India were crucial to the ways in which they navigated the meanings and forms of family relationships.

Britain

The nineteenth century was a period of massive demographic and economic change for Britain as industrialisation took root in nearly all areas of life. Over the first sixty years of Victoria’s reign, the populations of England and Wales nearly doubled, while Scotland’s also saw a significant increase. The population of Great Britain grew by nearly four million in the final decade of the nineteenth century alone.⁶⁹ This trend was fed by decreasing child mortality rates and improving life expectancies, advanced medical treatments and the development of urban sanitation systems, among other factors.⁷⁰ Such demographic expansion both shaped and was shaped by family life, where births, deaths, marriages and sexual practices were principally experienced and regulated. For example, family sizes were often large as the nation’s population expanded. Siblings could number ten or more, with vast age

⁶⁸ Davidoff et al., *The Family Story*.

⁶⁹ Michael Anderson, ‘The Social Implications of Demographic Change,’ in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain*, vol. 2, *People and their Environment*, ed. F. M. L. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1.

⁷⁰ For more on demographics, see Robert Morris, *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780-1870: A Social and Economic History of Family Strategies amongst the Leeds Middle Classes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 33-58; and Anderson, ‘Social Implications of Demographic Change,’ 1-70.

differences between the eldest and the youngest.⁷¹ Demographic expansion also deepened class divisions in Victorian society. When birth rates began to decline in the 1870s, they did so first among the upper and middle classes, allowing them to protect and acquire wealth while working-class incomes were increasingly stretched in bigger families.⁷² As class divisions became further entrenched in society, they shaped the structures and forms of family life in significant ways.

The vast majority of Britain's population in the Victorian era could be identified as working class, defined broadly. The nineteenth-century expansion of industrialisation encouraged many working-class families to move to burgeoning cities where factory employment was available. Here, they lived in overcrowded and low quality housing, where high disease rates (especially cholera, typhoid and tuberculosis) remained a constant threat due to poor working and living conditions, a lack of sanitation and an impure water supply.⁷³ The growth of the British economy brought about a significant rise in real wages during the late nineteenth century, but still many continued to work for an income that barely covered subsistence costs. In rural areas, severe poverty also struck many small-scale farmers who struggled to compete with large-scale industrialised agriculture. For working-class families in urban and rural locations, then, the labour of all members, including children, was crucial to survival.

On the other end of the spectrum, the upper classes felt their lives change comparatively little during the Victorian era. They retained much of their political power, with the landed gentry and hereditary titles dominating both the elected Parliament and the appointed House of Lords. The aristocracy continued a lavish social life of calling and entertaining based in London homes during 'the Season' and country estates for the rest of the year.⁷⁴ Nouveau-riche industrialists began to press into this exclusive world as they made their fortunes in the new economy, trying to attain titles, government positions and other markers of status either through marriage or social patronage. Some new peerages were created, for example in the

⁷¹ Leonore Davidoff, 'The Legacy of the Nineteenth-Century Bourgeois Family and the Wool Merchant's Son,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, sixth series, 14 (2004): 29-30; Davidoff et al., *The Family Story*, 128; and Anderson, 'Social Implications of Demographic Change,' 28.

⁷² For one discussion of declining birthrates, see Simon Szreter, *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain 1860-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁷³ Sewage systems and clean drinking water were implemented in cities like London later in the century, but death and disease rates remained comparatively high for working-class families. For statistics on urbanisation, see Anderson, 'Social Implications of Demographic Change,' 4-6.

⁷⁴ Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Society, Etiquette and the Season* (London: Croon Helm, 1973).

Rothschild and Guinness families. However, in many cases the aristocracy rejected the nouveaux riches, arguing that status was not just a matter of income and wealth.

Between the upper and the working classes fell the middle classes, which continued to grow in size and influence through the second half of the nineteenth century. Around mid-century, the middle class was still relatively small, largely involved in business, factory ownership, banking and professions like medicine. Over the next fifty years, it came to encompass two main groups: the upper middle class (including physicians, lawyers, clergy, leading civil servants, bankers and industrialists) and the lower middle class (including lower-ranking civil servants, retailers, managers and clerks). They were never a unified block; rather London professionals, Manchester manufacturers and small-town solicitors all had different expectations and experiences of family life. In general, though, these families had access to improved standards of living, increased leisure time and more disposable income. As the working classes moved into cities, the middle classes increasingly moved to new and growing suburban communities. These families employed servants—large numbers of them among the wealthier, and limited numbers among the less well off—to care for the household. In the upper middle class especially, childcare fell to nannies and nursery maids, with many parents having comparatively limited contact with children.⁷⁵ Although there was a recognition that women of poorer families would have to work, middle-class women were expected not to work outside the home, but might instead become involved with reform and charity movements focused on the poor, prostitution, alcohol and other perceived social dangers.

While the realities and possibilities of family life varied across classes and locations in Britain, representations of ‘ideal’ families were typically associated with broadly middle-class ideas of gender, generation, work, domesticity and faith. In a range of media including fiction, advertising, political speeches and personal writing, the family was idealised as a potent symbol of stability and a refuge from external pressures. In the face of societal anxieties that accompanied the rapid changes of industrialisation, and particularly with the increasing separation of work and home, the family was imagined at the heart of a moral order.⁷⁶ In this framing, the proper relations between men and women within a family were dependent on their

⁷⁵ Leonore Davidoff, ‘The Family in Britain,’ in Thompson, *Cambridge Social History of Britain*, 101.

⁷⁶ See John R. Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

supposedly complementary natures. Women were expected to act as helpmeets and ‘angels in the house,’ responsible for running the household and raising the children, naturally belonging in and fostering the environment of the home.⁷⁷ As a mother, a woman was supposed to act as a moral and spiritual guide for her children, absorbed in and dedicated to their well-being, and generally acting as ‘a figure of comfort who expresse[d] the nurturing qualities of her feminine nature.’⁷⁸ Men, on the other hand, were expected to be authoritative figures at home, as well as bread-winners who protected and supported the family by navigating the business of the outside world.⁷⁹ As a father, a man was supposed to ‘be absent enough to provide, to represent his family in public settings... but present enough to participate in, and benefit from, the domestic rituals, duties and pleasures.’ Among their ‘domestic’ duties were chastising, disciplining, protecting and educating children (especially sons, in preparation for the ‘public’ world) as well as providing for the family more generally.⁸⁰

Publicly disseminated representations of ‘proper’ family relationships were shaped by political and legal measures, layered onto Judeo-Christian tradition, that sought to define the rights and obligations of parents and spouses in relation to shifting ideas of gender, generation and family. During the Victorian era, several new laws shaped understandings of ideal (framed as ‘normal’) family life, intruding across the boundaries of apparently disordered families to regulate their relationships. The 1839 Custody of Infants Act, for example, began a legal trend toward giving judges more power to determine custody arrangements by offering the possibility for women to petition for custody of children, previously a right assumed to belong to the father-husband. The 1857 Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act made divorce

⁷⁷ This phrase, and the accompanying image of a ‘perfect woman,’ was immortalized in Coventry Patmore’s poem, ‘The Angel in the House,’ originally published between 1854 and 1856. See Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House* (London: George Bell, 1878). For more on women and the family, see Jane E. Lewis, ed., *Labour and Love: Women’s Experience of Home and Family, 1850-1940* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); and Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, *Public Lives: Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

⁷⁸ Lori Anne Loeb, *Consuming Angels: Advertising and Victorian Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 139.

⁷⁹ Claudia Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England* (Westport: Praeger, 2007), 6-7. For more on men and the family, see Michael Roper and John Tosh, ed., *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991); Davidoff et al., ‘Fathers and Fatherhood: Family Authority,’ chapter 5 in *The Family Story*; Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*; John Tosh, *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); and Trev Lynn Broughton and Helen Rogers, ed., *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). On fatherhood in the context of British India, see Elizabeth Buettner, ‘Fatherhood Real, Imagined, Denied: British Men in Imperial India,’ in Broughton and Rogers, *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century*, 178-89.

⁸⁰ Trev Lynn Broughton and Helen Rogers, ‘Introduction: The Empire of the Father,’ in Broughton and Rogers, *Gender and Fatherhood*, 4.

available to the middle classes as well as to the wealthiest members of society. It also gave more rights to women in separated marriages, allowing them to own property and control money.⁸¹ The Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882 'did not take the ultimate step of giving wives property rights and a legal status equal to those of their husbands, [but] they decreed that husbands could no longer exercise complete control over their wives' earnings, savings, and inheritances.'⁸² Overall, such laws sought to define the proper relationships between men, women and the state, thus regulating the forms that families could, were expected to and did take in the second half of the nineteenth century. Importantly, these laws were designed to regulate families already deviating from ideals through marital strife that impacted relationships between spouses and between parents and children. In the process, they served as a reminder that cultural and social ideals were not necessarily the lived experiences of families, a point that both exposed and resulted in 'deep cultural anxieties.'⁸³

While such acts reduced the total power of husbands over wives, women continued to lack significant political or economic power in the family, where gendered and generational structures of power shaped the forms that relationships took. For most of this period, married women had no independent legal status, and no or limited rights to property, money or custody of children. Outside the home, they continued to be excluded from suffrage, despite limited political reform which included a widening voting franchise among British men. The emergent feminist movement responded to such legal, political and personal restrictions in a range of ways. The movement could be fractured and diverse, but it remained primarily focused on the experiences, aims and concerns of middle-class white women. Particular issues included the vote and political equality; access to education, marital, custody and property rights; and improved employment opportunities. These debates contributed to heated discussions about what family and gender should look like in a changing British society.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Mary Poovey, 'Covered but Not Bound: Caroline Norton and the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act,' chapter 3 in *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

⁸² Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England*, 9.

⁸³ Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England*, 9.

⁸⁴ For some of the tensions and debates surrounding the meaning of the family, see Davidoff et al., *The Family Story*, 101.

While specific rights, responsibilities and relationships were debated in religious, legal, political and social circles, prevailing expectations of family underscored that relatives should offer mutual support to one another in whatever ways were available to them, economic or otherwise. Women's labour was generally needed to support the family among the working classes, but respectable forms of work were increasingly unavailable to middle-class women. As a result, it fell to men to provide for the family through the acquisition of property and capital, actions which became symbols of respectable middle-class masculinity. In this context, unmarried sisters might be expected to care for aging parents while their brothers financially supported them. Such an arrangement could fulfill gendered expectations by foregrounding women's supposed affinity for care in the home and men's responsibilities to provide materially for family members who could not earn their own incomes. Kinship networks could also be crucial to the operation of family businesses by providing financial support, advice, infrastructure and a base of consumers. In practice, however, relationships were not always and exclusively supportive, and family conflict frequently centered on moments when expected, assumed or agreed-upon forms of help were not forthcoming. As Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall suggest, the family's 'combination of material, social and emotional ties could become explosive' in these circumstances.⁸⁵

Broadly speaking, the middle-class family organised property, labour and inheritance according to particular gendered and generational structures of power. Within this system, marriage was a key relationship that ultimately worked as 'the economic and social building block for the middle class.'⁸⁶ Popular representations increasingly framed marriage as a product of romantic love, but it was also a strategy for protecting or advancing a family's economic and social position; for binding together families and solidifying business partnerships; and for shifting, defining, consolidating and confirming the boundaries of family more generally.⁸⁷ Partner choices demanded especially careful attention to the potential division of family property, since marriage outside of the family circle threatened to worsen the 'centrifugal tendencies' of partible inheritance, the preferred system of inheritance for the middle classes.⁸⁸ This divided property approximately equally among dependents;

⁸⁵ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 217.

⁸⁶ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 322.

⁸⁷ For a discussion of public representations of romantic marriage, see Loeb, *Consuming Angels*, 133.

⁸⁸ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 205-6.

if each dependent married 'out' of the family, this system could thus eventually destroy any sense of the original family estate. In response to these concerns, many middle-class families—enough to make up a 'minority pattern'—practiced cousin marriage (marrying first cousins), sibling exchange (two siblings marrying another set of siblings, sometimes even cousins of one another), and other entangled marriage patterns that confined and protected the boundaries of family from intrusion by outsiders.⁸⁹ For the middle classes across Britain, such a marriage choice could be an economic strategy that helped to entrench property and business, as well as other kinds of obligations and support systems, within a close, trusted and limited circle of people.⁹⁰

While marriage was particularly important in the family, other relationships were also critical in the ways that they defined and anticipated obligations, affections and relationships between people. The sibling relationship, for example, was framed in historical and literary sources as one of the longest-term and strongest bonds, especially within middle-class families. Siblinghood was idealised as a close, mutually beneficial relationship in which brothers and sisters carried out supportive roles considered appropriate to their gender, with sisters representing passive and calming spiritual guides, and sometimes pseudo-mothers, and brothers playing a protective role as sources of practical help and sometimes intellectual stimulus.⁹¹ In practice, sibling relationships were of course more complicated, with the potential for bonds and similarities between individuals also containing the potential for tensions and differences.⁹² In addition, the idealised physical closeness of siblinghood did not always come to fruition, since different schooling regimes for boys and girls could separate them from a young age.⁹³ In many families, though, siblings did act as role models, friends, aids in courtship or business partners. Large family sizes also created what Leonore Davidoff calls 'intermediate generations,' in which older siblings became caretakers for their younger siblings; in turn, the younger children would become caretakers for nieces and nephews as the eldest became parents themselves.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Davidoff, 'The Bourgeois Family and the Wool Merchant's Son,' 29.

⁹⁰ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 218-21.

⁹¹ Valerie Sanders, *The Brother-Sister Culture in Nineteenth-Century Literature: From Austen to Woolf* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 16.

⁹² Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 350; Lenore Davidoff, 'Where the Stranger Begins: The Question of Siblings in Historical Analysis,' chapter 7 in *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class* (New York: Routledge, 1995); and Sanders, *Brother-Sister Culture*, 9.

⁹³ Davidoff, 'Family in Britain,' 101.

⁹⁴ Davidoff, 'The Bourgeois Family and the Wool Merchant's Son,' 29-30.

Extended family could also be important, with aunts and uncles acting as ‘substitute parents and mentors,’ and cousins as ‘playmates, friends, potential marriage partners and as a source of social, material and cultural contacts.’⁹⁵ Overall, however, although these family relationships were expected to follow certain broadly shared middle-class ideals, the meanings and boundaries of family were always complicated and contradictory rather than coherent and consistent. Relationships were always personally and contextually situated, navigated by individuals according to changing circumstances.⁹⁶

In the second half of the nineteenth century, such circumstances were changing sometimes drastically for Britons, and with them so too were the expectations and structures of family life. This period saw new forms and places of work, migration to cities and suburbs, and an expansion of transportation technologies, all of which meant that family relationships could be increasingly mobile and separated. The instability of middle-class life, too, encouraged migration as families struggled to maintain reputations and standards of living amidst economic depressions that hit artisans, a declining gentry and younger sons particularly hard. For some, such separations were experienced within Britain, but for millions of others, migration crossed the borders of the nation in the hopes of finding work, land and opportunities. Between 1815 and 1914, approximately 22 million emigrants—many of whom were young, single men—left the British Isles as part of a wider pattern of European migration that saw over 50 million move over the same time period.⁹⁷ A significant percentage went to the United States, while others settled in Canada, Australasia and elsewhere. Many more moved between Britain and imperial sites like India without formally emigrating, travelling back and forth for work, education, furloughs and retirement.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Davidoff, ‘The Bourgeois Family and the Wool Merchant’s Son,’ 30. I focus on family relationships that were understood as contained by blood and marriage, a nineteenth-century move away from more extended visions of a ‘household-family’ during the previous century. See Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For a discussion of household composition in Britain in the nineteenth century, see Anderson, ‘Social Implications of Demographic Change,’ 56–65.

⁹⁶ For a discussion of the complicated ways in which advice, ideals and expectations could be received and acted upon, see Patricia Branca, ‘Image and Reality: The Myth of the Idle Victorian Woman,’ in *Clio’s Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women*, ed. Mary S. Hartman and Lois Banner (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 179–91; Margaret Ponsonby, *Stories from Home: English Domestic Interiors, 1750–1850* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 4; and Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England*, 10–11.

⁹⁷ Marjory Harper, *Adventurers and Exiles: The Great Scottish Exodus* (London: Profile, 2003), 2.

⁹⁸ See Charlotte Erickson, *Leaving England: Essays on British Emigration in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Buettner, *Empire Families*; Angela McCarthy, ed., *A Global Clan: Scottish Migrant Networks and Identities since the Eighteenth Century* (London: Tauris, 2006); and Marjory Harper

These patterns of mobility and migration impacted the forms and meanings of British family life, which could no longer be imagined as confined by the borders of the nation. Michael Anderson suggests that ‘almost every family... from all parts of the social scale lost at least one member overseas’ between 1850 and 1950.⁹⁹ In the context of such widespread emigration, families either ‘lost’ members entirely or they developed strategies for maintaining relationships across distances. Rising literacy rates, an expanded postal service and the introduction of a penny post meant that letter-writing became a key strategy for many separated relatives. This thesis focuses on those families with members who went to British Columbia or India—and more particularly, on the largely middle-class families who wrote (and preserved) letters between the metropole and these imperial sites. British Columbia and India occupied very different places in the British imagination and experience in the second half of the nineteenth century, and as such, attracted different kinds of migrants and fostered different kinds of family relationships.

British Columbia

The period from 1858 to 1901 saw dramatic change in the territory now known as British Columbia. Populated from at least 12 000 BCE, the northwest coast of North America had developed one of the densest and most diverse indigenous populations on the continent due in part to its rich natural resources and amenable climate. The first confirmed arrivals of Europeans on the Pacific coast came much later than most regions in the Americas, with Spanish and British maritime explorers travelling by the Cape Horn route from 1778 onward. From these explorations grew a maritime fur trade in sea otter pelts operated mostly by British, American and Russian traders. By the first decade of the nineteenth century, explorers working for the Montreal-based fur trading North West Company arrived by overland routes from the east. The 1821 merger of the North West Company into the British joint-stock Hudson’s Bay Company led to a commercial monopoly in the region. Although the land was not yet officially claimed as a colony, this extension of the land-based fur trade produced a ‘protocolonial’ British presence in the territory.¹⁰⁰

and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁹⁹ Anderson, ‘Social Implications of Demographic Change,’ 9.

¹⁰⁰ Cole Harris, ‘Towards a Geography of White Power in the Cordilleran Fur Trade,’ *Canadian Geographer* 39, 2 (June 1995): 132.

In order to run its operations, the Hudson's Bay Company established a fur trading district known as New Caledonia. The boundaries of the district were ill-defined, but roughly covered the northern part of the current province, outlined by the reach of its sparsely populated and scattered posts mostly north of the Thompson River drainage. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, however, the Company's main operations remained to the south of what is now British Columbia, at Fort Vancouver (near present-day Portland, Oregon) and throughout the Columbia District (known to the Americans as Oregon Territory, and approximately encompassing what later became the United States west of the Rocky Mountains). These southern interests were not securely held by the Hudson's Bay Company. From 1818 onward, the Columbia District was occupied by both British and American traders, and as the decades wore on, boundary disputes between them became increasingly heated. Fearing, correctly, that the boundary would be established at the 49th parallel, the Hudson's Bay Company began to look north to establish major forts that might be more securely in British claims; these included Fort Langley, built in 1827 in the Fraser River valley. As Fort Vancouver became less profitable and less secure, the Company established another key settlement in what is now British Columbia—Fort Victoria, on the southern tip of Vancouver Island—where they moved their centre of operations in 1843, three years ahead of the final boundary settlement.¹⁰¹

In 1849, the British government asserted formal colonial claims on Vancouver Island. Hoping to maintain a strategic foothold in the north Pacific without much investment of money or effort, the Colonial Office then gave the Hudson's Bay Company proprietary rights to Vancouver Island in exchange for a promise that they would encourage white settlement in the colony.¹⁰² However, pushed to employ Wakefieldian settlement schemes intended to reproduce a British class system, the Company initially made land-ownership expensive and unattractive for the majority of potential immigrants, thus keeping the colony's growth slow.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Fort Victoria was actually south of the 49th parallel, but Britain was granted the entire island by the Oregon Treaty of 1846.

¹⁰² J. I. Little, 'The Foundations of Government,' in *The Pacific Province: A History of British Columbia*, ed. Hugh J. M. Johnston (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996), 68; and Perry, 'State of Empire,' para. 8.

¹⁰³ Richard Mackie, 'The Colonization of Vancouver Island, 1849-1858,' *BC Studies* 96 (Winter 1992-93): 3-40; and Mouat, 'Situating Vancouver Island in the British World.'

The key turning point in the area's colonial history came in 1858, when rumours spread about the discovery of gold on the Fraser River, the mainland's major river-artery. The news rapidly reached discontented prospectors looking for goldfields with more potential than those exhausted in California and Australia. The quiet town of Fort Victoria, the nearest settlement, was quickly overwhelmed. The arrival of 450 miners on the first ship in April 1858 more than doubled Victoria's population in a single day, while the following months brought tens of thousands more, mostly transient miners waiting to go to the Fraser.¹⁰⁴ Responding to actions by the Hudson's Bay Company to assert British interests in the territory, the Colonial Office declared the mainland a crown colony, British Columbia, on 2 August 1858. Its capital was at New Westminster. In 1866, the island and mainland colonies were united under the name British Columbia in the face of financial crisis, but distinct identities and tensions about the distribution of power continued to shape the formerly separate regions.¹⁰⁵

The Colonial Office at least nominally operated the British Columbian colonies until 1871. However, British Columbia and Vancouver Island were not especially well understood by the metropolitan government, nor were they particular priorities as physically and economically peripheral colonies, especially in a period dominated by concerns with more volatile or productive areas of the empire. With few threats of significant indigenous uprising and with fears of incursion from the United States not taken seriously in Britain, the Colonial Office influence in British Columbia was relatively limited beyond the Royal Navy's Pacific base at Esquimalt (near Victoria) and the Columbia detachment of the Royal Engineers who built townships and roads on the mainland.¹⁰⁶ In practice, this meant that early colonial governance lay largely in the hands of one man: James Douglas. Already the Governor of Vancouver Island and the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Douglas was offered the first governorship of British Columbia if he cut his links

¹⁰⁴ Sharon Meen, 'Colonial Society and Economy,' in Johnston, *Pacific Province*, 109; and Harris, *Resettlement of British Columbia*, 80.

¹⁰⁵ Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 108; and British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), MS-0061, Birch family, box 2, file 2, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch, 'Victorian Odyssey' (reminiscences), chapter 4.

¹⁰⁶ For discussions of metropolitan attitudes to American interests in British Columbia, see BCA, MS-0505, Helmcken family, box 1, file 15, letters from A. G. Dallas to J. S. Helmcken, especially Inverness, 30 October 1866 and London, 15 November 1866. For discussions of the Royal Navy in British Columbia, see Barry M. Gough, *Gunboat Frontier: British Maritime Authority and Northwest Coast Indians, 1846-90* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994); and Boshier, 'Vancouver Island in the Empire,' 354.

with the Company. He accepted and governed both colonies until 1864, but remained firmly grounded in the local (largely fur-trade) context rather than engaged with metropolitan politics. For Douglas and other early administrators, a lack of regular mail meant that they were largely left by the Colonial Office to make their own decisions. For later governors, the advent of the telegraph simply further highlighted disconnections in understanding or priority, as they complained that orders from London demonstrated little appreciation of the practicalities, realities or local dynamics of British Columbian life.¹⁰⁷

The united colony attracted metropolitan disinterest partly because it continued to flounder in financial disarray. Unwilling to extend expenditure to help, the British government began to encourage local interest in joining Confederation with the new Canadian Dominion to the east, and in July 1871 British Columbia became its sixth province. Adele Perry sums up the vast changes in British Columbia between 1849 and 1871, a period which saw it go from ‘a diverse, First Nations territory to a fur-trade colony, to a gold-rush society grafted on a fur-trade settlement, to a resource-oriented colony with an emergent settler society.’¹⁰⁸ Until this time, British Columbia had maintained a sharp sense of separation from ‘Canadians’ for a number of reasons including the geographical barriers of the Rocky Mountains and the prairies; close connections with American territories to the south (and indeed, there was a strong lobby for the colony to join the United States instead of Canada); and a pervasive sense of ‘Britishness’ that, despite its distance, isolation and relative unimportance to the Colonial Office, remained central for many settlers, especially in Victoria.¹⁰⁹

Despite joining Confederation, this sense of separation lingered as British Columbia grew and changed as a province. It held a minor role in Canada’s political

¹⁰⁷ For example, BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, box 1, file 2, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch to brother John Birch, New Westminster, 11 June 1864; and BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, box 2, file 2, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch, ‘Victorian Odyssey’ (reminiscences), chapter 5.

¹⁰⁸ Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 9.

¹⁰⁹ For discussions of geography, isolation and distance, see Barry Gough, ‘The Character of the British Columbia Frontier,’ *BC Studies* 32 (Winter 1976-77): 28-40; Cole Harris, ‘Moving Amid Mountains, 1870-1930,’ *BC Studies* 58 (Summer 1983): 3-39; and Harris, ‘The Struggle with Distance,’ chapter 6 in *Resettlement of British Columbia*. For one interpretation of Anglo-American relations in British Columbia, see Charles John Fedorak, ‘The United States Consul in Victoria and the Political Destiny of the Colony of British Columbia, 1862-1870,’ *BC Studies* 79 (Autumn 1988): 3-23. For an overview of the divisions between British, Canadian and American identities in British Columbia, see Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 104 and 108-9. For more on the ‘British’ nature of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, see Mouat, ‘Situating Vancouver Island in the British World’; Bosher, ‘Vancouver Island in the Empire’; and Perry, ‘State of Empire.’

scene, with its small population 'limited in their influence by distance, both real and psychological, from the Dominion capital at Ottawa.'¹¹⁰ In addition, its economic influence was relatively weak; the colony had struggled in the 1860s, and as a province, it experienced depression in the early 1870s and recession in the early 1890s. However, the 1880s and 1890s did see some closer links begin to develop with eastern Canada, particularly after the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed across the continent in the mid-1880s. At the same time, for the families at the heart of this thesis, the railway did not just link British Columbia with the rest of Canada. It also meant that travel between British Columbia and Britain became much quicker and easier.¹¹¹ The time of immigration was cut down to a matter of days, and wealthier families could now travel in both directions to visit one another, at least on occasion.¹¹² The railway profoundly reshaped British Columbia in other ways too, in part by shifting internal senses of place within the province. The controversial decision to end the railway in Vancouver rather than with a maritime link to Victoria provided the stimulus for a new city which would eventually take over in terms of population and economic capital.¹¹³ In addition, the Canadian Pacific Railway—and other lines that followed—created towns, offered easier access to parts of the province while isolating others, and forged a trail of industrialisation and commercialisation that shifted the social, economic, political and cultural nature of the province.

The character of late-nineteenth-century British Columbian society was profoundly shaped by this historical context. The Colonial Office had originally intended British Columbia to become a self-sustaining and stable white settler colony like the Canadas or Australia. These hopes, however, were challenged by the nature of the environment of British Columbia. Its land was almost entirely inappropriate

¹¹⁰ Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 104–5.

¹¹¹ Indeed, Boshier contends that the railway brought 'as many or more British immigrants than Canadians.' Boshier, 'Vancouver Island in the Empire,' 350.

¹¹² The trip from England took only fifteen days in 1885. Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 113. By 1899, the trip from Vancouver to Montreal was just over 98 hours. BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe family, box 18, file 5, Charles Newcombe (Jr.) to father Charles Newcombe, Melville House, 11 June 1899.

¹¹³ The railway literally made Vancouver; the city was incorporated in April 1886. Within months, Vancouver expanded rapidly—from a population of 800 in 1884 to 2 000 (and 800 businesses) in 1886. By 1891, it had reached almost 14 000 people, and ten years later its population had passed Victoria's for the first time. Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 111–14 and 119. For more detailed explorations of the development of Vancouver, see Robert A. J. McDonald, *Making Vancouver: Class, Status, and Social Boundaries, 1863–1913* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996); and Harris, 'The Making of the Lower Mainland' chapter 3 in *Resettlement of British Columbia*.

for farming, except in isolated areas like those on Vancouver Island and in the Fraser Valley, although a ranching industry did develop in the Interior in the 1860s.¹¹⁴ Instead, British Columbia was built on resource extraction: first furs, then gold, then developing industries in coal, minerals, lumber and salmon. As a result of the dominance of these industries and the weakness of agricultural settlement, only some immigrants planned to set up a permanent and stable presence in British Columbia. Most arrived with shorter-term intentions in a range of positions including gold-prospecting, colonial governance, military posts and surveying work. From British Columbia they sought adventure or what Arthur Birch called ‘a delightfully wild experience,’ as well as riches, liberty from family, escape from social or economic misfortune, new opportunities, cheap land, an amenable climate or a fresh start.¹¹⁵

Resource extraction led to uneven regional development in British Columbia, with isolated clusters of transient settlement. New and isolated towns rapidly appeared with the discovery of a given resource, and often disappeared as quickly when the resources failed. Coal production became a major industry in the Nanaimo area on Vancouver Island, while the Kootenays saw the exploitation of silver, copper, lead and gold reserves near the end of the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, gold rushes extended further and further north, from the Fraser River to the Cariboo, and finally to the big rush in the Klondike in 1898. As with the earlier rushes, the Klondike brought a significant influx of population—approximately 200 000 to 300 000—to Victoria and Vancouver, primarily miners seeking to reach the northern territories.¹¹⁶

The immigration of settlers and the expansion of resource economies into new parts of British Columbia was a process ‘deeply and irreparably intertwined’ with the dispossession and marginalisation of indigenous people.¹¹⁷ In order to facilitate the extension of settlement in British Columbia, colonial, provincial and national ‘Indian’ policies largely focused on moving indigenous people into confined spaces (‘reserves’) that did not impinge on the economic or social interests of the settler

¹¹⁴ Gough, ‘Character of the British Columbia Frontier,’ 29-30; Cole Harris with David Demeritt, ‘Farming and Rural Life,’ chapter 8 in Harris, *Resettlement of British Columbia*; John Douglas Belshaw, ‘Rurality Check: Demographic Boundaries on the British Columbia Frontier,’ in *Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia*, ed. Ruth Sandwell (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999), 196.

¹¹⁵ BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, box 2, file 2, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch, ‘Victorian Odyssey’ (reminiscences), chapter 4.

¹¹⁶ Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 119.

¹¹⁷ Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 19.

population. Government agents and missionaries also sought to separate indigenous people from their cultures, communities and families through a range of strategies including the introduction of residential schools and bans on ceremonies like the potlatch. The dispossession of indigenous people was legitimised by discourses on culture, race, civilisation and savagery, imbricated with the common assumption among lay observers as well as government and medical agents that high death rates from disease indicated that they were a ‘dying race.’¹¹⁸ In light of these attitudes, personal correspondence from British Columbia often disregarded the presence of indigenous people in contemporary nineteenth-century life: their entrance into wage labour and urban spaces, their adaptation of practices to new conditions, and the imposition of reserve life.¹¹⁹

The white population remained a minority throughout much of the nineteenth century. In 1871, when British Columbia joined Canada, there were only about 8 500 people identified as ‘white’ in the province. By 1881, this number had grown to 17 000 (out of approximately 53 000 in total), but remained mostly bunched in what Perry calls ‘colonial enclaves’ like Victoria and New Westminster, as well as in Nanaimo and in backwoods camps.¹²⁰ These immigrants largely arrived from Britain, the United States, and colonies like Australia and New Zealand. As the nineteenth century wore on, they increasingly came from elsewhere in Canada as well. Indigenous people outnumbered this immigrant population until the latter decades of the century. Even as their numbers were devastated by disease, including the horrific smallpox epidemic of 1862, there were still approximately 29 000 indigenous people in British Columbia in 1881, well over half of the total population. By 1891, this percentage had dropped to just over a quarter of the province’s total.¹²¹ The other major group in British Columbia were Chinese immigrants, almost exclusively men, who came first for the gold rushes and later for employment building the railways. In 1871, the Chinese population was about 1 500, a number

¹¹⁸ See Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998); Harris, *Making Native Space*; Cole Harris, ‘How Did Colonialism Disposess? Comments from an Edge of Empire,’ *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94, 1 (2004): 165-82; and J. I. Little, ‘West Coast Picturesque: Class, Gender, and Race in a British Colonial Landscape, 1858-71,’ *Journal of Canadian Studies* 41, 2 (Spring 2007): 25-31.

¹¹⁹ See John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008); and Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*.

¹²⁰ Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 13. See Robert Galois and Cole Harris, ‘Recalibrating Society: The Population Geography of British Columbia in 1881,’ *Canadian Geographer* 38, 1 (March 1994): 38; and Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 104.

¹²¹ Galois and Harris, ‘Recalibrating Society,’ 43; and Harris, *Resettlement of British Columbia*, 252.

which grew to more than 4 000 in the next decade.¹²² British Columbia also contained several hundred black settlers who moved from—and in many cases back to—the United States, as well as a small population of Kanaka (indigenous Hawaiian) men who had arrived in the employment of the Hudson’s Bay Company and, in many cases, then married into local indigenous communities.¹²³

The British immigrant population was characterised by a striking gender imbalance. The dominance of resource industries meant that the vast majority of Britons were on arrival young, usually in their 20s or 30s, and often single men. The church and government tried to counter the low numbers of white women in British Columbia, seeing the alternatives as morally and politically unacceptable. Two so-called ‘bride ships’—the *Tynemouth* and the *Robert Lowe*—were sent to the colony in the early 1860s in one attempt to balance the population.¹²⁴ Other women arrived with husbands or families. Charles Hayward, for example, left his new wife Sarah in Stratford when he first immigrated to Victoria in 1862, but she joined him after he was settled, employed and able to support a family in the town.¹²⁵ The Moodys arrived as a family: Richard, leading the Royal Engineers stationed at New Westminster, his wife Mary and a growing family of young children. Overall, however, anxieties around the comparative lack of white women were slow to invoke significant demographic changes, and they remained in the minority throughout the century.

The meanings of class were slippery in nineteenth-century British Columbia, which saw contradictory impulses to equalise and to entrench power and class structures. On the one hand, Mary Moody observed with some regret, ‘we are all alike in this part of the world.’¹²⁶ Most settlers had no servants at all, and members of the colonial elite like the Moodys were shocked at the high wages paid to the few

¹²² The Chinese population is estimated to have been about 4 200 in 1881. Galois and Harris, ‘Recalibrating Society,’ 39 and 41-43.

¹²³ See Jean Barman’s work on Kanaka families in British Columbia, especially Jean Barman and Bruce McIntyre Watson, *Leaving Paradise: Indigenous Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest, 1787-1898* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006).

¹²⁴ Perry, “‘Fair Ones of a Purer Caste’: Bringing White Women to British Columbia,” chapter 6 in *On the Edge of Empire*.

¹²⁵ For biographies of individuals and families like the Haywards, see Appendix 1 (British Columbia) and Appendix 2 (India).

¹²⁶ BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, New Westminster, 22 January [n.y.]. See also BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to sister Emily, Victoria, 7 April [n.y.]; and BCA, MS-1463, Alexander Charles Harris, reel A00674, diary, [undated, entry from steamer on the Fraser River].

existing servants, as well as the high turnover as they left their posts frequently.¹²⁷ On the other hand, idealised rhetoric about equality and social mobility did not mean that everyone in British Columbia was in fact 'alike.' Notions of race, gender and citizenship privileged white, British-born men in its political and economic structures, while metropolitan prejudices with respect to class and occupation could remain strong.¹²⁸ However, while British Columbia did have a kind of class structure, it offered a level of mobility (upward and downward) and an opportunity to remake oneself, within limits. According to Arthur Birch, by 1864 New Westminster had become 'overrun with decayed gentlemen' who worked 'chipping wood' while 'a Tailor from Montreal & a Lumberman from up country' were among the richest and most powerful members of the community.¹²⁹ In British Columbia, the younger sons of country aristocrats could become rural ranchers; a Stratford carpenter and the son of a Hertfordshire farmer could become community leaders and influential mayors in Victoria; paupers could 'strike it rich' in the gold rushes, but so too could gentlemen ruin their finances and reputations there.¹³⁰

The rearrangement of class identities in British Columbia reflected internal regional divisions, especially with respect to its sometimes sharp divide between urban spaces and the backwoods. A defined upper class was split between the urban 'high societies' in Victoria and New Westminster during the colonial period. Members of the Victoria elite did not necessarily coincide with those who might have been among the political elite in Britain, but rather formed a peculiarly British Columbian class entrenched by fur-trade politics, family ties and a tight social circle. Especially during the middle decades of the century, these people were generally

¹²⁷ BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, New Westminster, 7 November [n.y.]; BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, Hope, 15 August [n.y.]; BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, New Westminster, 26 February [n.y.]; and BCA, MS-1963, Jane Fawcett, reel A01358, Jane Fawcett to sisters, Victoria, 5 October 1863.

¹²⁸ Meen, 'Colonial Society and Economy,' 121; and Harris, *Resettlement of British Columbia*, 83-84. For two examples of prejudice by class and occupation, see City of Victoria Archives (hereafter CVA), PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, on board ship, 25 March 1862; and BCA, E/C/W83, Felicité Caroline (Bayley) Wolfenden, John Bayley to sister Carrie Bayley, [n.p.], 17 August 1873. The Creole governor James Douglas, born in Demerara, offers a complicated and exceptional counterpoint to this alignment between whiteness, Britishness and power, with his political and social influence in Victoria representing fur-trade structures of power that were on the decline through the second half of the nineteenth century. On Douglas, empire, race and 'home,' see Perry, 'Is Your Garden in England.'

¹²⁹ BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch to brother John Birch, New Westminster, 7 May 1864.

¹³⁰ On the ranchers, see Edward Philip Johnson, 'The Early Years of Ashcroft Manor,' *BC Studies* 5 (Summer 1970): 3-24. The mayors were Charles Hayward and Thomas Harris, respectively. The former became an undertaker and the latter was a butcher in Victoria.

closely connected with James Douglas, forming a group which his rival Amor de Cosmos called the 'family company compact.' With a broader cultural move away from the mixed-race relationships of the fur trade in the second half of the nineteenth century, Victoria's political and social elite expanded and redefined itself through marriages with new arrivals, in turn giving them influence and power in the colony. Douglas's own daughters, for example, married John Helmcken, British Columbia's first physician and later a key politician in Confederation; Arthur Bushby, a colonial officer; and Alexander Grant Dallas, later Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company Western Department.

The New Westminster colonial elite formed a less tightly knit group. They were largely British-born officials who maintained mainland loyalties and rejected the political dominance and exclusivity of the island. A third upper-class group, based on economic power and entrepreneurial success, developed in Vancouver later in the century. The middle classes, including merchants and schoolteachers, were also mainly located in major cities, as well as in towns that sprang up according to the spread of resource economies and railway routes. Another group settled to ranch or farm large tracts of land, especially in the Okanagan, Kootenay and Cowichan areas. The importance of gold rushes and resource industries, meanwhile, meant that much of British Columbia's non-indigenous population lived in the backwoods. This group—roughly, the working classes, though this meant something quite different from in Britain—was 'nascent, highly mobile, [and] male.'¹³¹ Its members came from a range of backgrounds. As British Columbian labourers, they were generally based in very rudimentary, scattered and impermanent camps that moved depending on the location of work and resources. On their first arrival in British Columbia or during the winters, many of these men lived in temporary housing like hotels or shacks in urban settlements to wait for employment in the spring.

British Columbian life could be rough and unfamiliar for British migrants of all classes and backgrounds. Many were dramatically underprepared for the difficulties of 'roughing it,' a life which involved for Charles Hayward 'sleeping on the floor with my boots for the pillow.'¹³² Those who arrived in Victoria in 1858 found no hotels, and the city was largely tents. The nature of settlements changed quickly, but remained a far cry from British cities; when the Cornwall brothers

¹³¹ Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 16.

¹³² CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, Victoria, 19 June 1862.

passed through New Westminster in 1862, Clement called it ‘any thing [*sic*] but prepossessing, a mere small clearing amongst interminable forest,’ while Victoria continued to struggle with a lack of drinking water, sewage system or even roads that could compete with winter mud and summer dust.¹³³ It was not until the 1880s that Victoria began to be built more from brick than wood and canvas.¹³⁴ Outside the cities, gold miners were naïve about their prospects for ‘striking it rich.’¹³⁵ With the failure of many prospectors, ‘unskilled labourers [became] far too numerous,’ as Hayward observed.¹³⁶ Under these conditions, work could be difficult to find and paid low wages. At the same time, prices were high and many familiar goods were unavailable. As a result, failed prospectors like John Evans could not return to Britain as they hoped because they could not earn enough money in British Columbia to pay their way home.

The families studied in this thesis do not fully reflect the diverse British families involved in nineteenth-century British Columbia. Instead, they came mostly but not exclusively from the middle and upper strata of British society. Many were well-established and leading members of their local communities, whether in urban or rural areas of the country. Robert Burnaby, for example, came from an old Leicestershire family with a long history of clergymen and professors. His Cambridge-educated father, the Rev. Thomas Burnaby, held a number of positions including as Chaplain to the Marquis of Anglesey. Likewise, Mary Moody’s father, Joseph Hawks, was a prominent figure in Newcastle, a Justice of the Peace and a Deputy Lieutenant as well as a banker.

A significant number of these families had a longer history of involvement in the empire, especially through the military. Edmund Hope Verney commanded the HMS Grappler based at Esquimalt in the early 1860s after decorated service in the Crimean War and the Indian Rebellion, while two of his siblings were based in Malta and India at the same time.¹³⁷ His father, Sir Harry Verney and his paternal

¹³³ BCA, MS-0759, Clement Francis Cornwall, diary, New Westminster, 10 June 1862, 7; in Johnson, ‘Early Years of Ashcroft Manor,’ 4.

¹³⁴ BCA, E/C/W77, H. Leonard Witherby, Leonard Witherby to father, Victoria, 23 April 1899; and Reksten, *More English than the English*, 109.

¹³⁵ See CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, on board ship, 25 March 1862; and Morley Roberts, *Western Avernus, or, Toil and Travel in Further North America* (Westminster: A. Constable, 1896), 63.

¹³⁶ CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, Victoria, 30 August 1862.

¹³⁷ Edmund Hope Verney to father Harry Verney, Esquimalt, 23 December 1864; in Allan Pritchard, ed., *Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-65* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996), 238.

grandfather, Sir Harry Calvert both had prominent military and political careers, with his father serving in the House of Commons and on the Privy Council. Verney's maternal grandfather, Rear-Admiral Sir George Johnstone Hope, was a decorated British naval officer who served in the Napoleonic Wars and as a Member of Parliament. Although from less prominent families, Joseph Trutch and Richard Moody also had family histories of imperial service. Both men arrived in British Columbia in 1858 and quickly became key to the imperial apparatus in the mainland colony, surveying and engineering roads, towns and other infrastructure. Their families had been engaged in the empire for generations, especially in the Caribbean (Trutch was raised in Jamaica and Moody in Barbados), while Moody himself had already served in Ireland, Malta and as the governor of the Falkland Islands.

The archive is silent on the experiences of many other families. First, not all families wrote letters. For some settlers, British Columbia meant an escape from family, either through an openly hostile departure or a gradual slide into disconnection as their lives diverged. Richard Mackie has described one case of what appears to have been a total separation when a farmer from the Midlands, George Drabble, apparently unexpectedly embarked for British Columbia. No letters to his family remain, and in no extant records, either in British Columbia or in England, is there mention of one another.¹³⁸ Although class, education and literacy rates would have impacted the production of correspondence to an extent, families who did not write at all presumably came from a wide range of backgrounds.

In many other cases, families did write—either regularly, or in an occasional correspondence focused on departures, births, deaths, birthdays, holidays and other notable moments—but their letters have not survived or are not publicly available. This is a much more selective process that reflects the place of power, class and position in shaping the British Columbian archive. The vast majority of relevant collections are located in the provincial archives or in smaller local archives in British Columbia rather than in Britain.¹³⁹ Many have been donated by the families themselves, and reflect a range of experiences and backgrounds: Welsh miner John Evans's letters from the Cariboo to his grown children in Tremadoc, which illustrate

¹³⁸ Richard Somerset Mackie, *Wilderness Profound: Victorian Life on the Gulf of Georgia* (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1995).

¹³⁹ Other sources used in the thesis are from published compilations of correspondence. For example, Robert Burnaby's letters in Anne Burnaby McLeod and Pixie McGeachie, ed., *Land of Promise: Robert Burnaby's Letters from Colonial British Columbia, 1858-1863* (Burnaby: City of Burnaby, 2002); and Edmund Verney's letters in Pritchard, *Vancouver Island Letters*.

his desperate poverty in British Columbia and his very troubled family relationships across trans-colonial distances; Mary Moody's letters from New Westminster to her mother and sister in Newcastle, which outline her struggles to adapt to 'roughing it,' her longing for home comforts, the joys and troubles of being a mother, and her interpretations of her husband's experiences in British Columbia's politics; doctor John Sebastian Helmcken's letters from his mother in Whitechapel, London, a German immigrant struggling to make ends meet while her son established himself as a prominent member of Victoria's social and political elite; remittance man Tommy Norbury's letters to his family in Sherridge, Worcestershire outlining his experiences with establishing a ranch in the Kootenay region in the late nineteenth century; and correspondence to Carrie Bayley in Victoria from her brother John in England, in which he scolds, admonishes and advises her to marry well, take care of her grandmother, and live an upstanding life in British Columbia.

While covering such a range of family experiences, backgrounds, interests and relationships, these letters have generally ended up in public archives because they have been deemed important parts of province-building, written not necessarily by families who were successful, elite or prominent in Britain, but by individuals or families who established themselves in politics, business or society in British Columbia. Evans served as a representative in British Columbia's early legislatures; Moody's husband Richard led the detachment of the Royal Engineers stationed in New Westminster; Helmcken was the first physician in British Columbia, and became a leading politician and member of Victoria's society; Norbury became a prominent member of the Fort Steele community and held several local government positions; and Bayley later married Colonel Richard Wolfenden, the Queen's Printer formerly of the Royal Engineers. Other families considered in this thesis are less prominent and less well-known, though their collections tend to be smaller and more fragmented. In many cases, however, the experiences of such immigrants to British Columbia, especially those who were only present in the colony for a short period of time as transient labourers or gold prospectors, are comparatively under-examined in this study, a focus that grows from the character of the British Columbian archive.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ For deeper discussion of the colonial archive, see Carolyn Hamilton et al., *Refiguring the Archive* (London: Kluwer, 2002); Antoinette Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); and Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*.

India

By 1858, India held a very different place in the British imagination and experience than British Columbia, a position that was shaped by a longer and more conflictual history of interaction and trade, and closely associated with vast wealth and prestige. Initially just one of many European trading concerns on the subcontinent, the British joint-stock East India Company had aggressively and actively sought to gain control over territories, resources and people over the previous century. Through the combined means of military force, coercion and diplomacy, the Company endeavoured to gain direct or indirect control over India from rivals including the French, the Mughals, the Marathas and various local leaders. By the mid-nineteenth century, they had established and extended a period of ‘Company rule’ across most of the subcontinent.

The East India Company’s rapid expansion, its dependence on military power (especially Indian sepoys), and its new focus on Westernisation have all been connected with the events of 1857-1858, collectively known as the Indian Mutiny, Rebellion, Uprising or even First War of Independence.¹⁴¹ The Rebellion began on 10 May 1857, when Indian sepoys in the Company’s army at Meerut mutinied, leading to widespread uprisings and upheaval in both military and non-military Indian communities. Two particular moments—the siege at Lucknow and the murders of British women and children at Cawnpore—became British rallying cries for harsh reprisals against Indians. Mobilising anger and terror in both Britain and India, these events became symbols of Indian depravity in the imperial imagination.¹⁴² By the end of 1857, the British had regained at least nominal control over much of the region, but it was not until they defeated Rani Lakshmi Bai and her

¹⁴¹ There is a large scholarly literature on the topic, which includes discussions of the implications of each of these terms. For a small selection of recent works, especially regarding British interpretations of the events, see Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Biswamoy Pati, ed., *The 1857 Rebellion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); and Salahuddin Malik, *1857 War of Independence or Clash of Civilizations?: British Public Reactions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁴² For discussions of representations of the Rebellion, and particularly of these events, in British literature, see Patrick Brantlinger, ‘The Well at Cawnpore: Literary Representations of the Indian Mutiny of 1857,’ chapter 7 in *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); Benita Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries: India in the British Imagination, 1880-1930*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1998); and Nancy L. Paxton, *Writing Under the Raj: Gender, Race, and Rape in the British Colonial Imagination, 1830-1947* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1999).

forces at Gwalior in late June 1858 and signed a treaty on 8 July 1858 that the war officially ended.¹⁴³

Following the Rebellion, the British re-organised their official presence in India. The Government of India Act (1858) dismantled the East India Company, ending the period of Company rule and bringing India under the direct rule of the British Crown. The Mughal Emperor was banished and his heirs murdered in the hopes of eliminating challenges to Crown rule. The new British Raj was run by a system of government divided between London, Calcutta and the various presidencies. The India Office ruled from the metropole, headed by the Secretary of State for India, a new cabinet position. A Council of India was also established; its members were initially divided between Crown appointees and those elected by East India Company directors, although the former took more control over time. In India, the head of government was the Viceroy (formerly the Governor General) based in Calcutta and answerable to the Secretary of State in London. The Presidencies of Madras and Bombay also had Governors with their own advisory councils. The Princely or Native States continued to be ruled by Indians with some level of independence and autonomy under an overarching British suzerainty.

On the ground, the work of the Raj was conducted in part by the Indian Civil Service. This branch of government grew from the previously existing East India Company Service, but instead of continuing a tradition of personal patronage, competitive entrance examinations were introduced.¹⁴⁴ Examinations were held in Britain for male applicants in their late teens or early twenties.¹⁴⁵ While theoretically open to some Indians, the nature of the examination system and bureaucratic structure meant that civil servants were nearly all British. These examinations did open up positions to a wider range of British society, though. When competitions were first introduced, Oxford and Cambridge degrees dominated the results, but by 1874 more than half of the successful applicants had no university education.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ For an overview, see Douglas M. Peers, *India under Colonial Rule: 1700-1885* (Harlow: Pearson, 2006), 64-71.

¹⁴⁴ Robin J. Moore, 'Imperial India, 1858-1914,' in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 3, *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 429.

¹⁴⁵ The maximum ages changed frequently. In 1860 the maximum was 22, while six years later it had dropped to 21. By the late 1870s, the examinations were open to those between 17 and 19; successful applicants then spent two years studying Indian languages before beginning work in India at the age of 20 or 21. David Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste: Imperial Lives in the Victorian Raj* (London: John Murray, 2005), 44-46.

¹⁴⁶ Moore, 'Imperial India,' 429; and Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste*, 44.

However, as Robin Moore argues, the civil service tended to attract young men from certain middle-class backgrounds:

Between 1860 and 1874 three-quarters of the recruits came from professional, middle-class backgrounds, over a quarter from the clergy, a tenth from each of government service and the medical profession, and 15 percent from mercantile or legal families.¹⁴⁷

By 1887, there were over 1 000 members of the Indian Civil Service in total.¹⁴⁸

While the Indian Civil Service was crucial to Crown rule, British India remained a garrison state that had been forged from violence, was ruled from a position of fear and suspicion, and remained heavily dependent on its army. Following the Rebellion, the military was reorganised as British officials hoped to address problems that they felt had led to the violence. In 1857, the Company's three armies (Bengal, Bombay and Madras) had about 43 000 British troops and 228 000 Indian troops, while under the Raj, these numbers were brought closer to a ratio of 1:3.¹⁴⁹ The Bengal Army had previously relied on local high-caste sepoys, but following their uprising, the British came to rely especially on Sikh, Muslim and Gurkha soldiers, whom they saw as loyal, fierce and effective 'martial races.'¹⁵⁰ Indian regiments were also now mixed by caste, language and religion in an attempt to prevent any one group from dominating and perhaps rebelling again.¹⁵¹ Meanwhile, like recruits to the civil service, the increased numbers of British officers came largely from middle-class backgrounds, frequently from military families but also the sons of clergy, academics, merchants and others.¹⁵² Often they were only stationed in India for short periods of time, and might expect furloughs, leaves or new postings within a few years.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the extension of industrial development reshaped the ways in which British rule could be administered by civil servants and the military, as innovations in transportation and communication reshaped the political, economic and social lives of Britons and Indians. Market capitalism and British trade expanded with the development of ports, steam-shipping

¹⁴⁷ Moore, 'Imperial India,' 429.

¹⁴⁸ Ian Copland, *India 1885-1947: The Unmaking of an Empire* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 3.

¹⁴⁹ Peers, *India under Colonial Rule*, 73.

¹⁵⁰ D. A. Washbrook, 'India, 1818-1860: The Two Faces of Colonialism,' in Porter, *Oxford History of the British Empire*, 419; Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2004); and Peers, *India under Colonial Rule*, 73.

¹⁵¹ Washbrook, 'India,' 402.

¹⁵² P. E. Razzell, 'Social Origins of Officers in the Indian and British Home Army: 1758-1962,' *British Journal of Sociology* 14, 3 (September 1963): 248-60.

and urban factories, along with the construction of railways, roads, bridges and other transportation infrastructure within India. In 1858 there had only been 200 miles of railway track in India, while the following decade saw more than 5 000 completed. By the end of the nineteenth century, 25 000 miles of railway track covered British India, forging links between port cities and agricultural villages. Canals vastly expanded the possibility of irrigation, leading to the growth of mass agriculture.¹⁵³ With transportation becoming more efficient and cost-effective, India had become the first place destination for British manufactured goods by the early twentieth century, while it also exported increasing amounts of cotton, tea, coffee and other raw materials to the metropole.¹⁵⁴

As these changes took place, India came to hold a special—if anxious—place in the British imperial imagination. In 1876, its exceptional position was formalised in the declaration of India as the ‘Empire of India,’ with Queen Victoria taking the title of Empress, the only site where this occurred. On the ground, its treatment as the ‘jewel in the crown of empire’ was fed by increasingly hostile and fearful discourses on race, difference, health and the body.¹⁵⁵ Unlike in British Columbia where indigenous people were largely ignored as a dying race, Indians were understood as ever-present threats to British bodies and British rule. The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had seen a limited level of British adaptation to Indian practices in daily life and rule. However, by the second half of the nineteenth century, and particularly following the Rebellion, Britons began to mark out differences and distances from the Indians who vastly outnumbered them across the subcontinent. Indian bodies, foods, medicines, villages and environments were framed as dangerous, contaminated or uncivilised, giving rise to distrust, fear and disgust on the part of many British commentators. At the same time, British reliance on Indians in every aspect of life from political ceremonies to household chores and child-rearing fed into these fears as physical distance between races appeared both urgently required and seemingly impossible.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Copland, *India*, 4.

¹⁵⁴ Washbrook, ‘India,’ 419; and Peers, *India under Colonial Rule*, 79–80.

¹⁵⁵ For two key discussions of the discourses, ideologies and mechanisms of the colonial state which sustained British rule, see Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

¹⁵⁶ See David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Mark Harrison, *Public Health in British India: Anglo-Indian Preventative Medicine, 1859–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Mark Harrison,

By the mid-1880s, the increasingly organised, hostile and imperialistic form of British rule pushed some Indians—mostly middle-class, professional, high-caste and Western-educated Hindus—to found and join nationalist organisations. One of the most influential of these, the Indian National Congress, met for the first time in 1885. It aimed at challenging or dismantling what Robin Moore calls:

the fundamental bases of institutional reconstruction since the Mutiny... the Council of India, which seemed out of touch with India's needs, and too protective of Anglo-Indian service interests; the Indian Councils, which required more Indian representatives and greater freedom of discussion; the ICS [Indian Civil Service], which was too inaccessible to Indians; and the expensive, largely British, army.¹⁵⁷

These institutions of British imperialism were controlled by a comparatively small number of individuals. By the end of the nineteenth century, the European community in India totalled only 165 000, a tiny minority compared to an Indian population of about 300 million.¹⁵⁸ The European community was sharply divided by a complex and strict hierarchy partly but not wholly defined by occupation. Broadly speaking, upper-class Europeans included top administrators, top military officers, lawyers and Anglican clergy. By Paul Hockings' terms, the 'upper-middle class' was comprised of lower-ranking administrators, lower-ranking military officers, planters and chaplains; the 'lower-middle class' included traders, teachers, Protestant missionaries and non-commissioned officers; the 'upper-lower class' encompassed Catholic missionaries and British soldiers; and the 'lower-lower' pointed to mixed-race 'Eurasians'.¹⁵⁹ According to David Arnold's estimates, about half of the Europeans in nineteenth-century India were considered 'poor whites'.¹⁶⁰

Climates and Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India, 1600-1850 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); E. M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800-1947* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001); and Buettner, *Empire Families*.

¹⁵⁷ Moore, 'Imperial India,' 433.

¹⁵⁸ Buettner, *Empire Families*, 8. Buettner summarises the breakdown of the European community as represented in the 1891 census of India: 85 000 with the military (67 800 troops, 5 080 officers, and more than 11 000 wives and children); 10 500 with the civil service; 6 100 with the railways; and over 65 000 associated with other work including with missions, businesses and plantations. According to Gilmour, there were 154 691 Europeans in India in 1901. Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste*, 10.

¹⁵⁹ Paul Hockings, 'British Society in the Company, Crown, and Congress Eras,' in *Blue Mountains: The Ethnography and Biogeography of a South Indian Region*, ed. Paul Hockings (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 343-46. Hockings uses these terms to outline the class structure among the Nilgiri Europeans between 1850 and 1950, but Buettner argues that they can be applied more generally across British India. See Buettner, *Empire Families*, 7-8. For more on the 'non-official' British, see Raymond K. Renford, *The Non-Official British in India to 1920* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987).

¹⁶⁰ David Arnold, 'European Orphans and Vagrants in India in the Nineteenth Century,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 7, 2 (1979): 104.

Although poor whites had a significant numerical presence, the Anglo-Indian world was dominated by an ‘illusion of an essentially elite European community’ in which middle-class civil servants and military officers ‘appropriated an aristocratic style of ruling and living.’¹⁶¹ This thesis is largely focused on these middle- and upper-class British people who were, as Arnold describes them, ‘how the Raj chose to see itself.’¹⁶² Men in this group saw a limited range of respectable options to pursue in India. Most occupied positions in the Indian Civil Service or the military from their late teens or early twenties. The vast majority came from middle- or upper-class families, and often had with relatives in the military, clergy or imperial service. However, their family fortunes could range from very wealthy to comparatively poor, at least by middle-class standards. Indeed, economic troubles could act as additional motivation for sons to take posts in India, as was the case for Henry and Allie Beveridge in the late 1850s.¹⁶³

As in British Columbia, there were fewer British women than men in India. However, growing numbers—generally of middle- and lower-middle-class backgrounds—arrived throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, especially after the Suez Canal was completed in 1869.¹⁶⁴ In 1810, there had been only about 250 European women in India, but in 1872 there were about 5 000 British women in the North-Western Provinces alone (out of a total of 12 433 Britons) and in 1901, India had more than 42 000 British women (out of approximately 155 000 Britons).¹⁶⁵ The increasing numbers of British women in India reflected, in part, changing marriage patterns within the Anglo-Indian community. During the eighteenth century, intermarriage between British men and Indian women had been widely practiced, but a combination of social pressures,

¹⁶¹ Arnold, ‘European Orphans,’ 104-105.

¹⁶² Arnold, ‘European Orphans,’ 104.

¹⁶³ Lord [William] Beveridge, *India Called Them* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1947), 17. For a similar point for a slightly earlier period, see Margot Finn, ‘Family Formations: Anglo India and the Familial Proto-State,’ in *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History*, ed. David Feldman and Jon Lawrence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 100-117.

¹⁶⁴ Nupur Chaudhuri, ‘Memsahibs and their Servants in Nineteenth-Century India,’ *Women’s History Review* 3, 4 (1994): 550. Like in British Columbia, gender ratios reflected local and regional differences. Military camps were almost exclusively men while more established cantonments might have a larger (albeit still small) community of women. For two discussions of women in cantonments and military camps, see British Library, India Office Private Papers (hereafter BL), Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 17 May 1891; and BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Gilgit, 12 August 1895.

¹⁶⁵ Alison Blunt, ‘Imperial Geographies of Home: British Domesticity in India, 1866-1925,’ *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24, 4 (December 1999): 426.

official regulations and hardening discourses on race had virtually brought this to an end among the governing classes by the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁶⁶ As a result, although many Anglo-Indian men had ‘interpreted the rebellion as a sign that India was no place for families,’ the latter decades of the century marked what Alison Blunt calls ‘the consolidation of imperial domesticity’ through an emphasis on encouraging British family households and British femininity in India.¹⁶⁷ In this context, some of the women who moved to India in the second half of the nineteenth century did so because their husbands or fiancés were posted there. These men were sometimes cousins or long-time family acquaintances, but other times they had only just met during a furlough.¹⁶⁸ Such marital arrangements could be aided by—or indeed, reliant on—the exchange of letters and photographs between Britain and India.¹⁶⁹ Other women did not arrive with husbands or immediate intentions to marry, but rather came to undertake their own missionary, reform and education work; Annette Ackroyd (later Beveridge) was one such example.

For men and women alike, family histories of mobility could strongly influence their own involvement in India. As Elizabeth Buettner has demonstrated, many Anglo-Indian families established multi-generational patterns of mobility between Britain and India, which involved the education of children in Britain, employment and/or marriage in India, and furloughs and retirement back in Britain. These cycles developed partly because of concerns about health, tropical disease and racial degeneration in response to the Indian climates, cultures and people. Children were seen as particularly susceptible to such dangers, and were usually sent to Britain to be educated as long as it could be afforded by the family.¹⁷⁰ As a result, although some of the men studied in this thesis took advantage of new opportunities opened up by the expanded system of civil examinations, many had a long and distinguished history of family involvement in India. I consider, for example, letters sent between Lady Josceline Percy (née Margaret Davidson), the widow of Sir Robert Grant

¹⁶⁶ Blunt, ‘Imperial Geographies of Home,’ 426. For discussions of mixed-race relationships and changing marriage patterns, see Lionel Caplan, ‘Cupid in Colonial and Post-Colonial South India: Changing “Marriage” Practices among Anglo-Indians in Madras,’ *South Asia* 21, 2 (December 1998): 1-27; and Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India*.

¹⁶⁷ Rappaport, ‘The Bombay Debt,’ 246; and Blunt, ‘Imperial Geographies of Home,’ 422. See also Indrani Sen, ‘Between Power and “Purdah”: The White Woman in British India, 1858-1900,’ *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 34, 3 (1997): 355-76.

¹⁶⁸ See Gilmour, ‘Husbands and Lovers,’ chapter 14 in *The Ruling Caste*.

¹⁶⁹ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 21 June 1891.

¹⁷⁰ Buettner, *Empire Families*.

(Governor of Bombay), and her son Sir Charles Grant (Bengal Civil Service, and later Foreign Secretary of the Government of India) and his wife Ellen. In this case, the family held a prominent political, social and economic position both in Britain and India. Also from an Anglo-Indian family, Major-General Sir William George Lawrence Beynon had been born in Agra, was educated in England and returned to a decorated career in the Indian Army serving along the North-West Frontier in the late nineteenth century. Among the Anglo-Indian women studied here, some (such as Emily Hartt) had little or no family history on the subcontinent, while others (such as Mattie Robinson) came from families who had been involved with the civil service or army for generations. It was also common for multiple siblings and cousins to take positions in India at the same time, so their correspondence travelled not only between metropole and India but also within India itself.¹⁷¹

Living conditions for these Anglo-Indians were marked by what Herbert Sconce called ‘constant locomotion.’¹⁷² Although many were nominally based in major cities, fears about climate and health meant that some (especially women and children) moved seasonally between the plains and hill stations in order to avoid the dangers of the hot season. If the option was available, most took furloughs or sick leaves in Britain, or at the very least in Australia, Malta, Egypt or elsewhere.¹⁷³ On a more local scale, work with the civil service, military, railways or businesses required that men—and sometimes their families—also regularly move within India.¹⁷⁴ Army units were largely based in urban cantonments. Clearly demarcated and separate from ‘native’ parts of cities, these contained military infrastructure as well as shops, clubs, houses and churches. Higher ranking officers had their own houses, while soldiers lived in barracks; families like the Keens lived in married quarters within soldiers’ housing. While these cantonments offered semi-permanent bases for troops and their families, military work was marked by mobility and instability, as regiments constantly patrolled, fought or were reposted to other locations. Especially along the northern frontiers, military men experienced very different living conditions when

¹⁷¹ The Beynons, Beveridges and Robinsons are among the Anglo-Indian sibling sets included in this thesis.

¹⁷² BL, Mss Eur C492, Captain Herbert Sconce, Herbert Sconce to sister Sally Bunbury, North Cachar, 17 February 1859.

¹⁷³ See, for example, BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 232, James Sutcliffe, James Sutcliffe to mother, Calcutta, 22 January 1858; and BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Simla, 23 September 1896.

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, Bertram Portal’s letters from his tour with the Governor of Madras. BL, Mss Eur F494/1, Bertram Percy Portal, letters to mother Mary Portal, including Ootacamund, 15 April 1896; Calicut, 29 September 1896; Mangalore, 6 October 1896; and Bellary, 14 October 1896.

they left the cantonments. Here, they slept in the open, in tents or in local huts taken from villagers. They bathed in the open too, using 'buckets & waterproof sheets.'¹⁷⁵ When troops went out on these expeditions, their wives and children generally stayed in cantonments, in hill stations or indeed in Britain.

Within more settled areas, Anglo-Indian society revolved around a series of activities and organisations that demarcated the ruling elite and fostered a sense of community within it. Daily life for men, although often reported as boring, could include theatre, dances, football, hunting, polo, riding, shooting, sketching and any number of other activities.¹⁷⁶ Gentlemen's social clubs and hill stations were two types of spaces that particularly defined elite Anglo-Indian society, where William Lawrence Beynon found that 'everybody knows everybody else' and spending time well there could be an 'investment' for one's future career and advancement in India.¹⁷⁷ For women, life could be more monotonous. Most families employed Indian servants—often large numbers—to do nearly all of their daily maintenance tasks, which left Anglo-Indian women with sometimes minimal work.¹⁷⁸ Mary Procida has argued that these women helped civil servant husbands with their work in a variety of ways, but married middle- and upper-class women did not take on official work outside the home.¹⁷⁹ Thus unable to earn money for the family, Pollie Keen struggled with a husband who spent too much money on alcohol. She wrote with a mixture of pride and stress about her ability to make ends meet through thrifty sewing skills and a reduced number of servants while still demonstrating some level of respectability

¹⁷⁵ BL, Mss Eur D830/24, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Tirah, 3 December 1897.

¹⁷⁶ Jeffrey Auerbach, 'Imperial Boredom,' *Common Knowledge* 11, 2 (Spring 2005): 283-305.

¹⁷⁷ BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Simla, 14 July 1896; and BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to father William Beynon, Almora, 10 November 1896. See Mrinalini Sinha, 'Britishness, Clubbability, and the Colonial Public Sphere: The Genealogy of an Imperial Institution in Colonial India,' *Journal of British Studies* 40 (2001): 489-521.

¹⁷⁸ According to Mary Procida, even the lowest class Anglo-Indians would likely have two or three servants, while Alison Blunt suggests that the 'smallest British household in India' would contain ten to twelve servants and 'larger households would require up to 30.' Mary A. Procida, 'Feeding the Imperial Appetite: Imperial Knowledge and Anglo-Indian Discourse,' *Journal of Women's History* 15, 2 (Summer 2003): 127-28; and Blunt, 'Imperial Geographies of Home,' 429. See also Chaudhuri, 'Memsahibs and their Servants'; Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 103-14 and 150-93; and Fae Ceridwen Dussart, 'The Servant/Employer Relationship in Nineteenth Century England and India' (PhD thesis, University of London, 2005).

¹⁷⁹ Procida, *Married to the Empire*.

among her peers.¹⁸⁰ Other women might spend their time on reform work in Indian communities, riding, playing tennis, or writing extensive family letters.¹⁸¹

As with British Columbia, the correspondence used in this thesis does not reflect the wide range of British families in India. Those who did not maintain epistolary contact with relatives in Britain, of course, are not represented in such a study—a group that, again, presumably spans a variety of backgrounds and occupations. The families who are considered here did at least write on occasion, and their selection is further shaped by issues of production, preservation, archival practice and access. These are often much larger and more comprehensive collections than have been archived for British Columbia. In addition, unlike in the British Columbian case, where the collections are primarily archived in the former colony and are shaped by local and provincial priorities, these Anglo-Indian letters have been returned to the metropole, are archived in British institutions, and reflect official and institutional concerns there. Most come from the collections of private papers in the India Office Records at the British Library.¹⁸² The presence of such a large archive in London suggests that, particularly following the independence of India in 1947, there was a general feeling that such records are of concern to and belong in Britain rather than in India. In contrast to British Columbia where similar records are fundamental parts of a narrative of province-making, these letters are situated in an archive of (British) empire rather than of (Indian) nation.

As a result of the nature and history of this collection, my thesis focuses largely on the middle and upper classes of Anglo-Indians who sought to maintain a lasting, and sometimes multi-generational presence, in both India and Britain. The vast majority of these families were engaged with the Indian Civil Service or the military, and many held prominent positions in these bodies. Willy and Henry Robinson both held posts in the Bengal Civil Service, for example, while their brothers John and Jardy were officers in the Bengal Army. Herbert Sconce and Alick Bruce were also military officers, while George Stuart White held a number of positions including as Commander-in-Chief in India. The Keen family is an

¹⁸⁰ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 11 May 1891.

¹⁸¹ Procida, 'Feeding the Imperial Appetite,' 128. For more on British women and family life in India, see Nupur Chaudhuri, 'Memsahibs and Motherhood in Nineteenth-Century Colonial India,' *Victorian Studies* 32 (Summer 1988): 517-35; and Margaret MacMillan, *Women of the Raj* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988).

¹⁸² These collections tend to be larger and more comprehensive than the archived collections in British Columbia.

exception, having been neither wealthy nor prominent; Dick Keen was a collar maker in the Royal Horse Artillery, and his wife Pollie had worked in domestic service before her marriage. I also consider the correspondence of some Britons who were not part of the civil service or the army. These include the letters of William Hartt, who worked for the railways, and Franklin Kendall, who worked for the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. This correspondence, while not revealing the entire range of British experiences and interpretations of India, is rich in its exploration of a particular and comparatively powerful segment of British society in India, one that could be vastly diverse even while it was shaped by tightly regulated expectations of conduct.

In 1858, India and British Columbia faced significant changes as threats to British dominance brought joint-stock company monopolies to an end and introduced direct British rule in their place. The ramifications of these crisis points were to shape the history of both imperial sites through the second half of the nineteenth century, attracting particular kinds of British migrants and influencing their expectations and experiences there. These were, however, vastly different places. While one dominated the British imperial imagination—the ‘jewel in the crown of empire’—the other was precariously positioned on the ‘edge of empire,’ physically and mentally distant from the metropole. India was ruled under threat of force, while British Columbia was barely militarised, scarcely threatened and hardly protected. With such different climates, histories and roles in the empire, India and British Columbia have never been thought together in a sustained comparative study.

They were, however, part of the same vast British Empire that spanned the world by the end of the nineteenth century, and were thus linked to the same metropolitan context. By exploring the correspondence of broadly middle-class British families engaged with the two sites, this thesis aims to interrogate what, if anything, bound such imperial sites together, what linked them to Britain, and what separated them by sometimes vast senses of distance, difference and disconnection. In both cases, families were one of the key networks that tied together colony and metropole for individuals both ‘at home’ and abroad. Forms of family relationships shifted across the distances, but in many ways their letters sought to maintain or translate a sense of emotional connection and familial obligation grounded in the context of middle-class society in nineteenth-century Britain. In order to examine the

ways in which this occurred, I ask: what forms of family were forged between those who did not share a physical space? How did they understand themselves as family? And how did imperial places shape this process? The chapter that follows begins to examine these questions by exploring how correspondence itself—the practice and form of letter-writing within these families—made separation and empire possible, workable and indeed a part of family life between Britain, British Columbia and India.

Chapter 2. The Family Letter

The day is pass'd, the office closed,
The letters are deliver'd,
And some have joy without alloy
While some fond hopes are shiver'd;
A sweetheart wed—a dear friend dead,
Or closer tie is broken;
Ah! many an ache the heart may take
By words tho' never spoken.
But whether good or bad the news
This happens without fail,
Your letter read—the fire is fed
For waiting on the Mail.

- James Anderson, from 'Waiting on the Mail,' in *Sawney's Letters, or, Cariboo Rhymes*

In the name of the Empress of India, make way,
Oh Lords of the Jungle, wherever you roam.
The woods are astir at the close of the day—
We exiles are waiting for letters from home.
Let the robber retreat—let the tiger turn tail—
In the name of the Empress, the Overland Mail!

- Rudyard Kipling, from 'The Overland Mail,' in *Departmental Ditties and Other Verses*

The first literary publication in British Columbia was Scottish gold-miner James Anderson's 1866 collection of poetry, *Sawney's Letters, or, Cariboo Rhymes*. This was a series of letters in verse, ostensibly written to a friend or relative in Scotland. The epistolary poems centre on what would become a common theme of early British Columbian literature: a fraught relationship between family, distance, separation and letter-writing, as a young gold-miner negotiated his new life in British Columbia in relation to loved ones in Britain.¹⁸³ Through its structure and content, *Sawney's Letters* suggested that British Columbian life could be understood and narrated through intimate epistolary connections with the metropole, though Anderson also underscored the associated pain, anxiety and depression of an emotional life that was so dependent on tenuous postal connections. In the poem, 'Waiting on the Mail,' he situated the post at the heart of Cariboo life, as men waited restlessly amid rumours of its imminent arrival: first from a teamster from the Beaver

¹⁸³ James Anderson, *Sawney's Letters, or, Cariboo Rhymes from 1864 to 1868* (n.p: n.p., 1868?). For another example of these themes, this time in fiction, see Kim Bilir [Arthur H. Scaife], *As It Was in the Fifties* (Victoria: Province, 1895).

Pass, then from a miner at William Creek, and finally from a man named Pool who reported it was only ‘two days out from Yale!’ As their heated anticipation grew, in Anderson’s depiction, each man feared the possibility of receiving letters bearing bad news—or worse, no letters at all:

An anxious heart, who stands apart, / Expectant of a letter, / With hopeful mind, but fears to find / Some loved one still his debtor... A sweetheart wed—a dear friend dead, / Or closer tie is broken; / Ah! many an ache the heart may take / By words tho’ never spoken.¹⁸⁴

Two decades later, Rudyard Kipling published his poem, ‘The Overland Mail,’ which similarly gestured toward both the central and the very fragile and complex place of family letter-writing in the nineteenth-century British Empire. Focused less on emotional links to distant family, ‘The Overland Mail’ instead celebrated the local postal system, particularly the Indian *dawk* runners who delivered British mails despite rain and storm: ‘While the breath’s in his mouth he must bear without fail, / In the name of the Empress, the Overland Mail.’ However, the excitement, urgency and anticipation of the poem still revolved around the demands and desires of ‘we exiles’ who wait for ‘letters from home.’¹⁸⁵ In both poems, then, the letter was a looked-for connection to home and family, but one that was also grounded in, and sometimes challenged by, the realities of local colonial conditions. These fragile connections could also be complicated by the content of correspondence; feelings, attachment and affection could be symbolised by or interpreted in the letter, but these were not wholly or simply dependent on it. Indeed, as ‘Waiting on the Mail’ suggested, sometimes a sense of family connection could be undermined or unsettled by the very correspondence that sought to maintain it.

The place of letters in non-fictional British families engaged with British Columbia or India could be similarly central yet complicated. Not all families or individuals wrote letters, but without correspondence, they were left only with imagination and memory to narrate their relationships with distant relatives. For those who did maintain some level of contact by post, correspondence became the medium of their relationships at a distance. Although it relied on nascent and sometimes unreliable local postal systems, the letter was the only—or only regular—route by which family members could communicate with one another. This chapter

¹⁸⁴ Anderson, ‘Waiting on the Mail,’ in *Sawney’s Letters*, 4.

¹⁸⁵ Rudyard Kipling, ‘The Overland Mail,’ in *Departmental Ditties and Other Verses*, 2nd ed. (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., 1886), 53–54.

explores the ways in which British Columbian and Anglo-Indian relatives used letters to produce and navigate the meanings of family at a distance. Struggling against the constant threat of diverging lives and affections, letter-writers sought to articulate connection, intimacy and relationship in letters by reimagining space and distance, evoking different times (the past and the future), and translating familial duties and expectations into textual form. Each of these strategies, I argue, formed part of an epistolary mapping of intimate and imperial spaces through which Britons navigated complex relationships between family, distance, metropole and colony.

The shape of letters

While each letter and relationship varied, the overall forms of late-nineteenth-century family correspondence could be remarkably similar. The materials, layout, salutation, signature and language of letters followed broadly shared trends that were produced from what Eve Tavor Bannet terms ‘letteracy’: the ‘collection of different skills, values, and kinds of knowledge beyond mere literacy that were involved in achieving competency in the writing, reading and interpreting of letters.’¹⁸⁶ In order to make sense of a letter and to maintain a correspondence, Britons called upon a cultural understanding of what epistolary communication was or should be. The common conventions and knowledge demonstrated in late-nineteenth-century middle-class British family letters in the empire were similar in some ways to family letters in other periods, and to other kinds of letters in the same period. At the same time, the specific forms, styles and materials of these letters also reflected the particular historical contexts in which they were produced.

In general, correspondents sought to choose subjects that were of interest to both writer and reader, although they probably did not always do so successfully.¹⁸⁷ Some letters were clearly aimed at reassuring relatives that the writer was doing well, while others did not gloss over the more difficult aspects of colonial life.¹⁸⁸ Overall, family correspondence was primarily concerned with asking and answering questions about one another and describing experiences: both the mundane and the unusual in

¹⁸⁶ Eve Tavor Bannet, *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1688-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xvii.

¹⁸⁷ Gerber, ‘Writing with a Purpose: Immigrant Epistolarity and the Culture of Emigration,’ chapter 3 in *Authors of Their Lives*; and Errington, ‘Webs of Affection and Obligation,’ 8.

¹⁸⁸ For an example of positive representations, see BCA, E/C/W77, H. Leonard Witherby, Leonard Witherby to mother, Westholme, 15 May 1899. For examples of discussions of the more difficult parts of immigrant experience, see BCA, MS-2167, T. Roger C. Hicks, Roger Hicks to daughters Flo, Pansie and Josie, Stikine River, 3 April 1898; and BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 3, Tommy Norbury to brother Coni Norbury, Tobacco Plains, 10 February 1888.

their daily lives; the social, economic and sometimes political worlds in which they moved; their health, and that of acquaintances; and their future plans. Letters were filled with advice, admonishments, claims to affection and occasional disagreements, while also negotiating the sometimes sticky concerns of family finances, wills and businesses.

Letters were usually written in pen on standardised notepaper that would be folded in half, giving the writer four panels on which to write. However, for correspondents in more isolated imperial posts, especially in British Columbia, access to such supplies was sometimes unreliable. When they were unable to replenish their stocks, writers apologised for using unconventional materials like pencil or foolscap paper.¹⁸⁹ In addition, while metropolitan relatives were generally able to write letters under favourable and consistent conditions like at a household writing desk, those who lived more transient lives in colonial places often found themselves writing while on the move or camped in tents.¹⁹⁰ In one such instance, William Hartt explained the impact of his surroundings on a letter to his fiancée's sister: 'I have commenced this letter really in a good train... so if the writing looks a little shaky you must put it down to the bad road.'¹⁹¹ Hartt's handwriting was indeed shakier than usual, marking the conditions of his mobile context visually on the page.

Most correspondents recorded the date and place at the top of the letter.¹⁹² Salutations and signatures varied slightly, but were generally addressed with some variation of 'My Dearest [first name or relation],' and closed with some variation of 'Ever yours most affectionately, Your loving [typically the writer's full name, although occasionally a family nickname or their relationship to the recipient].' The opening paragraph usually concerned the correspondence itself: what letters had been received, what had been sent, what the writer thought of the content and style

¹⁸⁹ For example, BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Gilgit, 12 August 1895.

¹⁹⁰ BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to sister Emily, Victoria, 7 April [n.y.]; BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe family, vol. 18, file 1, Charles Newcombe to wife Marian Newcombe, Tip Top Pacific Side, 1 October 1883; BL, Mss Eur D830/24, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to sister Katie, Tirah Valley, 5 November 1897; BL, Mss Eur D830/24, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Camp Maidan, 15 November 1897; and BCA, MS-2167, T. Roger C. Hicks, Roger Hicks to daughters Flo, Pansie and Josie, Stikine River, 3 April 1898;

¹⁹¹ BL, Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, William Hartt to future sister-in-law Fanny Buck, [?], 3 January 1883. See also BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, [?], 29 March 1879.

¹⁹² This was standard enough that Lucy Mathias specially noted that her cousin, Charles Newcombe, had included 'no date & no address' on a letter sent from Victoria. BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe family, vol. 18, file 17, Lucy A. Mathias to cousin C. F. Newcombe, Putney, 6 April 1899.

of the latest letters, and information about the postal system. These discussions allowed writers and readers to track the course of a correspondence.¹⁹³ One typical example can be found in John Brough's 18 March 1862 letter to his sister from New Westminster. In his opening paragraph, Brough noted that a 1 January letter from Scotland had arrived on 13 March, a missive that had 'afforded me much pleasure, as I have almost given up having any more letters from Comrie.' Before that, he had not received anything from his family since May 1861 (from his brother James, dated 16 March of that year). Unlike some letter-writers, Brough did not take an explicitly accusatory tack when discussing this infrequent correspondence, but instead suggested that perhaps some of their letters had been 'in some way or other mismanaged in their transmission to this quarter of Her Majesty's dominions.' He also noted that his relatives had not indicated which letters they had received from him, so he listed what he had sent so that they could account for each.¹⁹⁴

Such discussions of correspondence were not merely impassive lists of dates that letters had been sent and received. In her work on family letters between Britain and Upper Canada, Jane Errington argues that similar 'ritualized openings were not empty rote,' but rather acted as 'a crucial affirmation of the intimacy that the writer assumed existed with the recipient.'¹⁹⁵ Whether or not these reflected affection or intimacy, however, these passages did suggest the central significance invested in correspondence. They indicate that relatives were critically aware that letters had become the medium of family at a distance; familial obligations, affections and etiquette had to be enacted, reflected and expressed through the style, shape, content and frequency of correspondence.

The expectations and forms of family letters varied depending on whether they were regular or not. Even when there was significant news to share, some families put off writing. In 1891, Dick Keen received one letter from his sister-in-law, which, as his wife Pollie explained, informed him all at once that:

the poor father has been dead 12 months the 12th of last June, that his old grandmother is still alive has been very ill but is pretty well again now. His stepsister is married and got two children and the brother's

¹⁹³ See David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994), 19-28.

¹⁹⁴ BCA, MS-2797, John Brough, John Brough to sister, New Westminster, 18 March 1862.

¹⁹⁵ Errington, 'Webs of Affection and Obligation,' 8.

wife has got three [children], 2 girls and a boy 10 months old and that he is so like Dick that they have named him Richard.¹⁹⁶

While Keen clearly did not hear from his family often, many other relatives wrote to one another regularly. For them, the mail day strongly shaped the rhythms and character of letter-writing. As William Hartt explained, ‘when I sit down to write a letter I have to do so regardless of the state of my mind, simply because the mail goes on that particular day, & if I did not write then there would be no letter for a week.’¹⁹⁷ Some regular correspondents wrote letters the night before the mail left or even on the morning of mail day, while others wrote throughout the week, adding a couple of sentences or a paragraph each day.¹⁹⁸ In other cases, individuals kept a diary over a much longer period, which they later shared with family either as excerpts or a complete document.¹⁹⁹

When regular correspondents were aware that they may not write for a while, they warned recipients and explained the changing circumstances in their lives that would prevent them from accessing the post. In India, this usually related to military deployment from more settled areas to isolated camps, while in British Columbia this was more often a journey into the backwoods for gold prospecting or labour in resource industries.²⁰⁰ If a very long time lapsed without such prior warning, relatives could become anxious and worried.²⁰¹ This was generally less extreme for Anglo-Indians in colonial governance or military service, as there was a more steady flow of information through newspapers and official communication. In British Columbia, though, people could easily disappear if they did not maintain correspondence, and

¹⁹⁶ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, [n.d.] October 1891. For another example, see BCA, MS-2436, Victor Robinson, George Robinson to son Victor Robinson, Dudley, 3 January 1875.

¹⁹⁷ BL, Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, William Hartt to future sister-in-law Fanny Buck, [?], 3 January 1883. See also BL, Mss Eur C176/151, Henry Beveridge, Phemie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Squires Mount, 23 November 1857; BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, [n.p.], 15 January 1860; BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, [?], 21 April 1870; and BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother, Sialkot, [n.d., letter 6].

¹⁹⁸ BL, Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, Emily Hartt to sister Fanny Buck, Tirhoot, 28 June 1883.

¹⁹⁹ Harry Guillod in Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., ‘Harry Guillod’s Journal of a Trip to Cariboo, 1862,’ *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 19, 3-4 (1955): 187-232; and CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, Victoria, 10 June 1862.

²⁰⁰ For example, John Brough warned his brother James that ‘it is likely you will not hear from me for eight months’ while he ‘[tried his] luck at the gold digging.’ BCA, MS-2797, John Brough, John Brough to brother James Brough, New Westminster, 16 April 1866. See also BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Jullundur, 10 April 1868.

²⁰¹ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 26 June 1858.

in some cases worried relatives wrote to mutual acquaintances in British Columbia to enquire after people who had gone silent.²⁰²

Families worked out responsibilities for letter-writing in different ways. When there was more than one relative in a location, certain individuals often took on the role of primary correspondent, writing on behalf of the others. Sometimes this individual had a special relationship with the recipient, as in the case of close sibling pairs like Clara and Jardy Robinson, or Maggie and Henry Beveridge, who wrote to one another more often than to other relatives.²⁰³ In other cases, it was women—especially mothers, but also sisters, daughters, in-laws and others—who took on this role in day-to-day correspondence, which fell under the category of women’s work in the family.²⁰⁴ Fathers tended to write much less often, in many families writing only immediately after the original departure or regarding business and finances. There were of course exceptions to this, including Edmund Verney’s extensive correspondence with his father from Vancouver Island.²⁰⁵ In some cases, families co-wrote letters, with one individual writing the majority and others adding a note in the margins or on the envelope.²⁰⁶ The named recipients of a letter likewise varied when multiple family members lived in one location. In some families, letters were addressed to the same person from week to week, while other correspondents

²⁰² BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 10, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Fish Lakes, 23 February 1895. For another strategy, see Elizabeth Jane Errington, “‘Information Wanted’: Women Emigrants in a Transatlantic World,” in *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*, ed. Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 12. The book *Undelivered Letters* includes letters from a slightly earlier period that never reached their destination, whether their intended recipients had moved, failed to redirect their mail, died or returned home without warning. Helen M. Buss, ed., *Undelivered Letters to Hudson’s Bay Company Men on the Northwest Coast of America, 1830-57* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003).

²⁰³ See the two family collections, BL, Mss Eur F142, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson; and BL, Mss Eur C176, Henry Beveridge.

²⁰⁴ In his first (archived) letter to his future sister-in-law Fanny Buck, William Hartt explained that writing would be his wife’s job in future ‘as my world is so heavy’ and ‘naturally she will have leisure, while I am at work & when we are together, we shall be thinking more of one another than of others.’ BL, Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, William Hartt to future sister-in-law Fanny Buck, [?], 3 January 1883. The association between women and letter-writing could also influence who was named as the recipient of letters. See BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady (Margaret) Josceline Percy to daughter-in-law Ellen Grant, London, 3 January 1876, in which Percy addresses Ellen since ‘I suppose Charlie [Percy’s son and Grant’s husband] has not much time to write or read letters.’

²⁰⁵ Pritchard, *Vancouver Island Letters*.

²⁰⁶ For example, BL, Mss Eur C176/151, Henry Beveridge, Phemie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Squires Mount, 18 March 1858, with a note from sister Maggie Beveridge at the bottom. Other individuals enclosed short notes in letters from relatives. For example, BCA, MS-2797, John Brough, John Brough to sister Catherine, Mary Hill, 24 December 1863.

circulated through relatives—writing to their father one week, their mother the next, a sister the following, and then repeating the cycle.²⁰⁷

While letters were usually written by and addressed to individuals, there was a general understanding among middle-class Britons that family correspondence was to be shared more widely, read aloud to one another and even sent from town to town.²⁰⁸ This enabled letter-writers to maximise their impact and coverage, and minimise work, as they only had to write one ‘family letter’ per mail to suffice for all relatives.²⁰⁹ Mary Moody did continue to write ‘varieties’ of the same letters to her mother and sister, but she still expected them to share in case she included different information.²¹⁰ Families with multiple relatives living outside of Britain sometimes even expected letters to be passed around the empire, too. Tommy Norbury’s mother sent a letter and book to his brother, Coni, in Bermuda, who was supposed to send it onward to British Columbia, while the Beveridge and Beynon siblings forwarded letters for one another in India.²¹¹ If a letter-writer wanted the content to remain private, on the other hand, he or she had to specify this in writing. Sam Beeman, for example, marked one letter to his sister-in-law ‘Private and Confidential,’ telling her, ‘In many long letters I have written *as ever* fully & freely to *yourself* & dear Thomas but let this be to *yourself*.’²¹²

Letters were always written for a particular audience, whether this was an individual, a family or a social circle. Like all writing, they were shaped by

²⁰⁷ Tommy Norbury wrote to family members in turn, expecting them to share the letters with each other. See BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 5, Tommy Norbury to brother Coni Norbury, Fort Steele, 9 December 1890.

²⁰⁸ Some were also published in newspapers, with or against the writer’s will. See Alan Conway, ‘Welsh Gold-Miners in British Columbia during the 1860s,’ *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 21 (1958): 51–74; and BCA, MS-0369, Alexander Pringle, A. D. Pringle to wife Mary, Hope, 22 April 1860.

²⁰⁹ BL, Eur Mss Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Mediterranean, 22 February 1858; BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, Victoria, 23 February [n.y.]; BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, box 1, folder 2, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch to brother John Birch, New Westminster, 15 November 1864; and BL, Mss Eur D594/42, Sir Courtney Peregrine Ilbert, Helen Ilbert to sister-in-law Maye Ilbert, Chapslee, 5 August 1884.

²¹⁰ BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, Victoria, 4 August [n.y.]. See also BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to sister, Sialkot, 26 March 1890.

²¹¹ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 13, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Fish Lakes, 7 February 1898; BL, Mss Eur C176/149, Henry Beveridge, Jemima Beveridge to son Henry Beveridge, Haverstock Hill, n.d. [spring 1858?]; BL, Mss Eur D830/24, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to sister Katie, Camp Shinwari, 20 October 1897, copied on Culverlands letterhead; BL, Mss Eur D830/24, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to sister Katie, [?], 24 October 1897; and BL, Mss Eur D830/24, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to father, [?], 24 October 1897.

²¹² BCA, MS-2073, Samuel O. Beeman, reel A01401, Sam O. Beeman to sister-in-law Sarah Beeman, [n.p.], 14 July 1868.

expectations and relationships, and included intentional and unconscious silences. Much of the time the evidence simply does not exist to make these silences apparent, but some letters do clearly reveal the intentional shaping of content and tone for given audiences. William Beynon's letters from battles on the North-West Frontier clearly distinguish family correspondence from other forms of writing. In these letters, he was highly critical of military and political strategy in one campaign, seeing one official decision as leading to an unnecessary waste of life. 'Some one,' he claimed to his father, 'ought to be shot for it.'²¹³ These were opinions that he did not feel that he could voice in official correspondence, memoirs or articles, but he felt safe and appropriate doing so within the family.²¹⁴

In other cases, letter-writers distinguished between information that was suitable only for the named recipient of a letter and what information could be shared more widely. George White was willing to write to his sister Jane about a battle in which he had fought the week before, but asked her not to mention 'our little row' to his wife Amy, who was visiting his family at the time. As he wrote, 'it will only make her anticipate more little rows and I have not written a word about it to her.'²¹⁵ Pollie Keen also self-censored in letters to certain relatives, but for very different reasons. In 1890, she became pregnant, but withheld details from letters to her mother because her younger brothers would also read them. Deeming those particulars unsuitable for 'the boys,' she instead wrote to her sister Carrie with details about her due date.²¹⁶

In another case, David Beveridge shared 'unpleasant news' with his brother Henry about summons that had been left for their aunt regarding some promissory notes that had not been paid. He explained the situation in detail, but asked that Henry 'had better not allude to it in your letters as I at least have said nothing about it to them [their parents and sisters] at Haverstock Hill & hope it may be quietly got over without their knowing.'²¹⁷ Such letters aimed to pass on important information about the family's well-being, but tried not to produce a dialogue about it. In other

²¹³ BL, Mss Eur D830/24, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to father William Beynon, [?], 24 October 1897.

²¹⁴ BL, Mss Eur D830/24, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Camp Mamani, 28 December 1897.

²¹⁵ BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Kurram Valley Field Force, 21 May 1879.

²¹⁶ BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to sister Carrie, Sialkot, 26 March 1890.

²¹⁷ BL, Mss Eur C176/153, Henry Beveridge, David Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Glasgow, 27 September 1858.

cases, the information was perhaps less significant, but was framed as equally delicate. In letters to Ellen Grant, her daughter-in-law in India, Margaret Percy was highly critical of her other daughter-in-law, Victoria, who was living in London. In on such letter, Percy asked Grant to be cautious of what she wrote about ‘Mrs Robert’ in return in case her son read the letters: ‘when I write to you any small remarks upon Mrs Robert or Robert *don't* take any notice of them in writing to me as Robert always wants to read the letters.’²¹⁸

Censorship could be taken to much more extensive and long-term levels. Imperial lives offered the possibility of experimenting or acting in ways that might have been restricted by societal or familial expectations in Britain. Some individuals chose to maintain a correspondence with family that left out select details about life choices that might have been less palatable to a metropolitan audience. This was particularly true of mixed-race sexual relationships or marriages that might have been tolerated in certain colonial contexts, but would not have been in the metropole. While these were declining in acceptability in both British Columbia and India by the second half of the nineteenth century, such relationships continued for men like Tommy Norbury’s ranching partner, Phillipps, who lived in a rural part of British Columbia.²¹⁹ Phillipps had married the daughter of a local indigenous chief, and together they had five children. The relationship had lasted for at least twenty years before his family in England received any information about it, apparently through the network of gossip spread by other settlers to their families and acquaintances in Britain. His sister, Mrs. Grassett, tried to learn more about her brother’s relationship from Norbury, in the hope that non-family letters would continue to offer different forms of knowledge and censorship than the letters from her brother had done.²²⁰

Finally, family correspondence did not only consist of words on a page. Small items were often enclosed in letters as gifts or mementos, while larger parcels were also arranged and discussed through letters. These material goods evoked a tangible

²¹⁸ BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady (Margaret) Josceline Percy to daughter-in-law Ellen Grant, London, 31 March 1876.

²¹⁹ On mixed-race marriages in British Columbia, see Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*. Perry’s work extends an earlier literature on mixed-race relationships in the fur trade. Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980); and Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980). On mixed-race relationships in India, see Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India*.

²²⁰ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 1, Tommy Norbury to [addressee not named], fragment, n.d. [begins ‘two from you’]; BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 5, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Fort Steele, 4 July 1890; and BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 6, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Fort Steele, 1 May 1891.

and mobile form of memory or knowledge about distant places and people.²²¹ Photographs grew in popularity as they became cheaper and more accessible to middle-class families both in Britain and abroad. These were most often portraits of family members, but relatives also sent photographs of houses, servants and local activities.²²² Besides photographs, enclosures in letters were often items from the local environment: flowers, ferns and other pressed plants, seeds, and even once ‘specimens of very big mosquitoes.’²²³ When sent from Britain, these items were usually picked from home gardens or neighbourhood places. Phemie Beveridge, for example, sent her brother Henry a dried spring flower that could be associated with a specific place and person: an anemone from Finchley Wood picked by the family ‘all together... Papa helped me, so maybe he pulled the one I send to you.’²²⁴ When sent from British Columbia or India, such items were more often selected because of their novelty and ability to represent those environments. Harold Nation sent ‘some chips which the beavers cut out of the trees’ from British Columbia to his sister, Vera, while Allie Beveridge tried to send skins from India for his sister Phemie’s natural history collection.²²⁵

Money also made up a significant part of these circuits of exchange. Anglo-Indian incomes often supported and sustained family lifestyles and reputations in the metropole.²²⁶ British Columbia was a less steady source of income for middle-class

²²¹ See John Plotz, *Portable Property: Victorian Culture on the Move* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

²²² See especially Nicole Hudgins, ‘A Historical Approach to Family Photography: Class and Individuality in Manchester and Lille, 1850-1914,’ *Journal of Social History* 43, 3 (Spring 2010): 559-86. For examples, see BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Simla, 17 August 1874; BL, Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, Emily Hartt to sister Fanny Buck, [Tirhoot], 15 May 1883; and BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 3, Tommy Norbury to mother, Kootenay, 21 July 1888.

²²³ BL, Eur Mss Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 26 June 1858. See also BL, Mss Eur C176/162, Henry Beveridge, Maggie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Carnock, 30 June 1858; BCA, MS-0505, Helmcken family, box 1, file 16, Catharine Helmcken to son J. S. Helmcken, London, 7 August 1866; BCA, MS-0505, Helmcken family, box 1, file 15, Catharine Helmcken to son J. S. Helmcken, Whitechapel, 23 November 1866; BL, Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, Emily Hartt to sister Fanny Buck, Tirhoot, 30 October 1883; BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 9 March 1890; and BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to mother, Moyie, 5 May 1901;

²²⁴ BL, Mss Eur C176/151, Henry Beveridge, Phemie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Squires Mount, 15 April 1858.

²²⁵ BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to mother, Moyie, 8 April 1901; and BL, Mss Eur C176/152, Henry Beveridge, Allie Beveridge to mother Jemima Beveridge, [?], 17 July 1865.

²²⁶ For an earlier period, see Finn, ‘Family Formations.’ One example can be found in the Beveridge family. Beveridge, *India Called Them*, 17; and, among others, BL, Mss Eur C176/153, Henry Beveridge, David Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Glasgow, 27 September 1858; and Mss Eur C176/162, Henry Beveridge, Maggie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Durham, 24 August 1886.

migrants, and money was as likely to flow from Britain to sustain British Columbian endeavours as it was to move in the other direction. Tommy Norbury, for example, was one of many remittance men sent to the province in the late nineteenth century. There, he relied on the financial support of his parents in Worcestershire, although eventually—unlike many of his ilk, including his own brother, Bill, who was sent back to England in shame—he eventually became financially independent.²²⁷ Harold Nation, on the other hand, while struggling financially at first, was able to use correspondence to send some money to family in England, although not enough to prevent his mother from having to take in washing work, much to his horror.²²⁸

The shape of postal systems

As industrialisation, urbanisation and new technologies took many relatives far from the family home, the railway and the steamship meant that letters could also be carried to these people in increasingly rapid, reliable and frequent mails. This made communication easier, but its increasing speed and ease could also make letter-writing more of a duty and expectation among separated and literate families. While letters were by no means a new phenomenon by the mid-Victorian period, the second half of the nineteenth century saw significant changes to postal systems within and beyond Britain's borders that reshaped the nature, forms and exchange of family correspondence. Within Britain, this was an era of postal development and reform, beginning with the first penny post, which was introduced in 1841. This offered an affordable opportunity for many more Britons to communicate with others around the country, and subsequent reforms worked to extend and improve this system.²²⁹

²²⁷ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 4, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Fort Steele, 13 July 1889; and BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 12, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, [n.p.], 26 March 1897.

²²⁸ BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to mother, Moyie, 24 February 1901.

²²⁹ Davidoff et al., *The Family Story*, 103. For more on the development of the postal system, see Howard Robinson, *Britain's Post Office: A History of Development from the Beginnings to the Present Day* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953); M. J. Daunt, *Royal Mail: The Post Office since 1840* (London: Athlone, 1985); C. R. Perry, *The Victorian Post Office: The Growth of a Bureaucracy* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1992); Christopher Browne, *Getting the Message: The Story of the British Post Office* (Stroud: A. Sutton, 1993); Patrick Joyce, 'Postal Communication and the Making of the British Technostate,' (CRESC Working Paper 54, Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change, University of Manchester and the Open University, August 2008); and Catherine J. Golden, *Posting It: The Victorian Revolution in Letter Writing* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009). For more on developments in imperial mails, see John K. Sidebottom, *The Overland Mail: A Postal Historical Study of the Mail Route to India* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1948); and Howard Robinson, *Carrying British Mails Overseas* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1964).

While the post within Britain became more systematised, regularised and accessible, some imperial sites were still developing basic delivery services and postal infrastructure. In the second half of the nineteenth century, British Columbian mails developed from a very rudimentary system to a relatively effective and reliable combination of post, parcel and telegraph using ship, rail and wire, though they remained challenged by difficult physical conditions en route to and within the colony.²³⁰ Family letters travelled through and discussed this changing system, but the demand of British families for effective communications also helped to shape it by providing the revenue and impetus to expand it.

The earliest transmission of mail from Britain to the region now known as British Columbia operated in the early-nineteenth-century fur trade world, carried along Hudson's Bay Company lines by ship and brigade from fort to fort.²³¹ The post improved dramatically around 1850, when the California gold rush brought a regular American service to San Francisco by the Panama route. These lines later extended northward to the Columbia River and Puget Sound, from which point letters were carried by Hudson's Bay Company canoes to Fort Victoria.²³² With the advent of the Fraser River gold rush in 1858, the Secretary for the Colonies proposed a regular post from Britain via British and American routes. However, transient and unstable gold rush conditions meant that the establishment of an official, permanent postal system made little sense. Instead, private express companies like Wells, Fargo and Company extended north from California to carry most of the colony's mail. Less popular and still nascent government systems ran between Forts Victoria, Langley, Hope and Yale along fur trade routes; these routes were usually one to two weeks slower, but cost approximately half as much as private delivery.²³³ On Vancouver Island, with its base of agricultural settlers rather than transient miners, a regular mail service was established between Victoria, Saanich, Saltspring Island, Cowichan, Nanaimo and Comox.²³⁴ All in all, colonial Vancouver Island and British Columbia had a 'strange and anomalous' postal system, primarily operated by private interests,

²³⁰ Harris, 'Moving Amid the Mountains,' 3; and Harris, 'The Struggle with Distance,' chapter 6 in *Resettlement of British Columbia*.

²³¹ A. Stanley Deaville, 'The Colonial Postal Systems of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, 1849-1871,' *British Columbia Historical Association Annual Report and Proceedings* 3 (1925): 45.

²³² Deaville, 'Colonial Postal Systems,' 48.

²³³ Deaville, 'Colonial Postal Systems,' 51.

²³⁴ Deaville, 'Colonial Postal Systems,' 53.

with little (British Columbia) or no (Vancouver Island) legislation on the mail, and with few official post offices.²³⁵

When the united colonies of British Columbia entered Confederation with Canada in 1871, the federal government took over the postal system. The skeletal structures of the colonial era, in disarray and losing money, were regularised and deprivatised. The mail was made more compatible with international systems, and postage rates were reduced. A regular service was established fortnightly between Victoria and San Francisco, with a weekly steamer to Olympia as well.²³⁶ By the final fifteen years of the nineteenth century, the trans-Canada railway and an increasing population helped to counter the heavy costs of moving mail to, from and within the province. The railway also reduced—though did not eliminate—the danger of shipwrecked mail boats, a problem which had plagued the early British Columbian postal system.²³⁷ The collection and delivery of letters to backwoods settlements along the railway line was more efficient than the previous system, but it was also an awkward process. As Harold Nation explained when he was working as a local postmaster, the train would not even stop as it rolled through his town. Someone on the train would simply throw off a mailbag containing the region's letters, while he would toss on board a bag of letters to be sent.²³⁸

This developing infrastructure meant that mails arrived from Britain increasingly regularly, frequently and efficiently. The post had initially been an unreliable monthly service to Victoria or New Westminster, but it had gradually been improved to a fortnightly, then a weekly one.²³⁹ By 1883, Charles Newcombe celebrated that mails arrived in Victoria '3 or 4 times a week from Canada & the European countries.'²⁴⁰ These mails, however, could take a long time to arrive. In

²³⁵ Deaville, 'Colonial Postal Systems,' 45.

²³⁶ Deaville, 'Colonial Postal Systems,' 56-58.

²³⁷ Divers occasionally recovered the cargos from sunken ships; the contents of mailbags were in many cases only slightly damaged. BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, New Westminster, 30 January [n.y.]; BCA, MS-0369, Alexander Pringle, A. D. Pringle to father, Victoria, 10 January 1860; CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, Victoria, 14 August 1862; and BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, box 1, file 2, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch to brother John Birch, New Westminster, 15 May 1866.

²³⁸ BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to [?], Swansea [British Columbia], 2 September 1900.

²³⁹ BCA, MS-0060, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, vol. 2, Mary Moody to [?], on board *HMS Satellite*, Victoria, Christmas Day 1858; BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 2, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Tobacco Plains, 13 November 1887; and BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 11, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, 17 May 1896.

²⁴⁰ BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe family, vol. 18, file 1, Charles Newcombe to wife Marian Newcombe, Victoria, 28 October 1883.

1861, letters took about six weeks to two months to travel between Scotland and British Columbia.²⁴¹ By 1899, Leonard Witherby found that letters travelled between England and Victoria in seventeen days on average. By this time, cablegrams were also possible, which could cross the same distance in about two hours.²⁴²

Even with these improving times, letter-writers complained about the inconsistent British Columbian postal service. As Mary Moody explained to her sister, ‘the Mails are very uncertain & the arrangements *very* bad.’²⁴³ Even communication within British Columbia could be difficult and unreliable.²⁴⁴ Delays in British Columbian mails were commonly blamed on the transnational nature of the postal system, relying as it did on ‘Yankee mails’ or the Panama route before the completion of the trans-Canada railway.²⁴⁵ British Columbians felt that there was little that they could do about the situation. As Tommy Norbury declared near the end of the century, ‘The mail service is about as bad as ever if not worse... & the worst of it is, there is no remedy as the Govt. take no notice of petitions or anything else.’²⁴⁶ Sometimes individuals chose to send letters and other messages with friends who were travelling to Britain instead of relying on this impersonal and often unreliable postal system.²⁴⁷

The Anglo-Indian post experienced both similar changes and different challenges in the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1858, the mails between Britain and India, and within India itself, were faster, more regular and more secure than the newly established British Columbian mails. Less than thirty-five years before, mail had travelled primarily by East India Company sailing ships around the Cape of Good Hope, a distance of 11 000 miles. Correspondents expected to wait two years before hearing a response to their letters—about a year for the travel outward and a year for the response to come back. The first attempt to cover this route using early marine engines came in 1825, a trip that took only 113 days. By the

²⁴¹ BCA, MS-0142, John Christie, diary, [n.p.], 28 July 1861.

²⁴² BCA, E/C/W77, H. Leonard Witherby, Leonard Witherby to father, Victoria, 7 May 1899.

²⁴³ BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to sister Emily, Victoria, 2 February [n.y.].

²⁴⁴ BCA, MS-0060, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, vol. 2, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, New Westminster, 7 January 1863.

²⁴⁵ BCA, MS-0055, Crease family, box 10, file 74, Henry Pering Pellew Crease to parents, Victoria, 12 December 1859; and CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, Victoria, 29 May 1862.

²⁴⁶ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 6, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fish Lakes, 18 May 1898.

²⁴⁷ CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, Victoria, 14 August 1862.

early 1830s, entrepreneurs began planning mail routes that travelled overland by Egypt and through the Mediterranean, a trip only 6 000 miles long and taking approximately half the time as the Cape route. Most of these advancements came as a result of the strong encouragement of Britons in India, who demanded more efficient postal connections with 'home.' Metropolitan politicians were much less focused on the issue, but they did occasionally examine the matter during the late 1830s, including with a Select Committee on Steam Communications with India. Like in British Columbia, internal mail delivery was dominated by private express companies. Under this system, the route between Calcutta and Bombay took eleven days on average—fourteen in the wet season—by *dawk*, or postal runners.²⁴⁸

By the 1850s, the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company had extended its services to Asia, delivering mail from Britain to Ceylon, Madras and Calcutta, while the East India Company continued to carry mails to Bombay. Under this system, and throughout the decades that followed, the post could be sent by one of two primary routes: by Southampton or by Marseilles.²⁴⁹ From Suez to Calcutta, both routes only took about a month at mid-century.²⁵⁰ By the early 1860s, British mails could reach India in about a month total due to the improvement of steam and rail travel, while telegraph technology was also extended to the subcontinent, which Aaron Worth argues 'help[ed] to represent as well as consolidate imperial power in India.'²⁵¹ The Suez Canal, completed in 1869, continued to speed up deliveries. However, throughout the period, Indian mails were influenced by environmental conditions; the mail days and speed of the post changed by the season, leaving earlier and taking longer to allow for the southwest monsoon and difficult weather during the summer.²⁵²

Families with longer experience in India were in a position to comment on the increasing speed and ease of the post during the second half of the nineteenth

²⁴⁸ Robinson, *Carrying British Mail Overseas*, 159-62. See also Sidebottom, *The Overland Mail*, for details on this section.

²⁴⁹ In Anglo-Indian letters, many discussions of the postal system concerned whether to write by Southampton or Marseilles. BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 31 May 1858; BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 26 June 1858; and BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Jullundur, 15 February 1870.

²⁵⁰ Robinson, *Carrying British Mail Overseas*, 166.

²⁵¹ Aaron Worth, 'All India Becoming Tranquil: Wiring the Raj,' *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 9, 1 (Spring 2008): para. 6.

²⁵² BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 16 May 1858; and BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 31 May 1858.

century. In 1876, when mails generally travelled the route in less than a month, Margaret Percy marvelled that she ‘remember[ed] when it took 3 months to get information from India,’ while Allie Beveridge noted to his brother Henry, ‘India is but a stones throw from home nowadays compared with what it was a few years ago.’²⁵³ However, despite these developments, many Britons in India, like those in British Columbia, continued to feel that mails were ‘so long coming out and so often lost.’²⁵⁴ Mail ships met with disaster on occasion, but as with British Columbia, the letters were sometimes recovered. The *Ava*, for example, sunk near Trincomalee on 16 February 1858, taking with it some of the earliest Indian letters from Henry and Allie Beveridge. After an anxious wait and ‘grievous disappointment’ on the part of those at home, the letters were salvaged by divers. Jemima Beveridge, their mother, celebrated the arrival of her ‘treasures from the deep,’ and noted that only ‘some of the envelopes were torn, but the writing was perfectly legible through the discolouration of the paper.’²⁵⁵

In imperial contexts where correspondence from home could take weeks or months to arrive—if it arrived at all—the developing postal systems between Britain and British Columbia or India were very important in shaping discussions of letter-writing within separated families. In the face of these material conditions, individuals developed certain writing strategies and articulated particular understandings of correspondence in an attempt to navigate distance, evoke connection and shrink senses of space.

Space and the family letter

The relationship between family, distance and space was always a complex one. There was no simple correlation between physical proximity and familial affection. However, these were often idealised and imagined together, and letters were consistently underpinned by the idea that separation might mean a decline in communication and affection. Responding to these fears, correspondents repeatedly

²⁵³ BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady (Margaret) Josceline Percy to daughter-in-law Ellen Grant, London, 28 January 1876; and BL, Mss Eur C176/152, Henry Beveridge, Allie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Edinburgh, 20 April [n.y.].

²⁵⁴ BL, Mss Eur F455/1, Lt.-Col. Alexander Hervey Blackwood Bruce, Elizabeth Bruce to sister-in-law Jane Alexander, [?], 21 December 1858.

²⁵⁵ BL, Mss Eur C176/151, Henry Beveridge, Phemie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Squires Mount, 18 March 1858; and BL, Mss Eur C176/149, Henry Beveridge, Jemima Beveridge to son Henry Beveridge, London, Spring 1858. See also BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 232, James Sutcliffe, James Sutcliffe to mother, Calcutta, 8 December 1862.

expressed a determination to combat threats to family relationships posed by imperial distances. Letters were their primary means of doing so, and writers employed a range of strategies to maintain or evoke affective ties between separated relatives.

At the heart of this process was the idea that letters could produce an imagined space for family that would replace or substitute for physical proximity. In his exploration of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English letter-writing, James How develops an idea of epistolary space that offers a useful starting place for thinking about the ways in which letter-writers imagined the relationship between family intimacy and imperial distance. How suggests that letters opened up a space in which people could 'live... and think... [and] act' in relation to one another when they could not do so in physical proximity.²⁵⁶ As Jane Errington argues, within this epistolary space, relatives could create 'an imaginary world of home' in which they continued to advise, help and comfort one another, and in so doing, they sought to 'maintain the essential fabric of their family's lives.'²⁵⁷ Letters, then, were 'spaces of connection' that 'operated to bring distant aspects of the world together.'²⁵⁸ In such framings, we might understand the letter as an opportunity for connection—a sharing of information, knowledge, emotion and experience—that could replace or approximate face-to-face contact, in the process shrinking senses of distance.

This notion of epistolary space as connection offers one way of thinking about how family correspondence was framed and understood. As an ideal of letter-writing, it is reflected in the historical record. Nineteenth-century commentators argued that the familiar letter was an opportunity for replicating conversation, proximity and intimate immediacy. One of the epigraphs to the 1894 letter-writing manual, *Good Form*, proclaimed, 'Letter writing is in fact, but conversation carried on with the pen when distance or circumstances forbid the easier method of exchanging ideas by spoken words.'²⁵⁹ To a similar end, another manual, *Aids to Epistolary Correspondence*, claimed:

A correspondence between two persons, is simply a conversation reduced to writing, in which one party says all that she has to

²⁵⁶ James S. How, *Epistolary Spaces: English Letter-Writing from the Foundation of the Post Office to Richardson's Clarissa* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 1.

²⁵⁷ Errington, 'Webs of Affection and Obligation,' 4.

²⁵⁸ How, *Epistolary Spaces*, 4; and Macdonald, 'Intimacy of the Envelope,' 103.

²⁵⁹ Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, *Good Form: Letter-Writing, its Ethics and Etiquette, with Remarks on the Proper Use of Monograms, Crests and Seals* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1894), epigraph.

communicate, replies to preceding inquiries, and, in her turn, proposes questions, without interruption by the other; who takes precisely the same course in her answer. We should write to an absent person as we would speak to the same party if present.²⁶⁰

Although it is not certain to what extent correspondents actually read and used manuals to guide their writing, many did directly and indirectly express similar expectations and hopes in family letters. James Douglas, for example, scolded his daughter Martha for a writing style that did not approximate her face-to-face communication, instructing her, 'When you write to Mamma, write and speak to her, as you know how, and when you write to Papa, write and speak to him, as if he was before you; and then you will write well.'²⁶¹ Other letter-writers deliberately used a conversational style of writing that fostered a sense of proximity and familiarity. Writing to her brother Henry shortly after his departure for India, Phemie Beveridge rejected formal language in favour of 'just *mannder[ing]* so, in a *pleasant chatty* manner with you... till dinner time (cold pork, it was a pot roast yesterday).'²⁶² In taking on a chatty tone and topic, her letter sought to maintain a casual sense of familiarity between siblings, and to include the absent brother in the family's daily home life even at a distance, rather than relegating him to basic knowledge of key happenings.

Many letter-writers explicitly framed correspondence as a bridge or strand that connected them to distant relatives. In the process, it seemed to shrink imperial spaces by acting as a 'Chain of Love which ties our hearts in one—*across the World*,' as Henry Crease described it.²⁶³ To this end, Pollie Keen declared, letters 'cheer us up for when we get them we don't feel so far away,' and overall family correspondence 'seems to make the distance less.'²⁶⁴ Similarly, Emily Hartt wrote to her sister that 'it does not seem possible that I am so far from you all when I hear about you,' while Mary Moody explained, 'We do not at-all feel we are so far from home, now we have

²⁶⁰ *Aids to Epistolary Correspondence, or, Familiar Directions for Writing Letters on Various Subjects: Also Rules of Punctuation* (Quebec: C. Darveau, 1887), 4.

²⁶¹ James Douglas in W. Kaye Lamb, 'Letters to Martha,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 1 (January 1937): 37.

²⁶² BL, Mss Eur C176/151, Henry Beveridge, Phemie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Squires Mount, 15 April 1858. See also BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 12 May 1865; and BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to mother, Moyie, 8 December 1901.

²⁶³ BCA, MS-2879, Crease family, box 68, file 27, reel A01839, Henry Crease to wife Sarah Crease, Victoria, 12 April 1859.

²⁶⁴ BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 16 February 1890 and 16 March 1890.

our letters *regularly*.²⁶⁵ In this shrunken sense of imperial distance, relatives imagined that they might ‘spend a little time’ together in the act of writing and reading letters.²⁶⁶

However, while individuals framed letters as a way of constructing imagined spaces of connection, epistolary space was also marked by reminders of disruption, disconnection and disjuncture. On the most basic level, letters called attention to physical distance because they were most often written precisely because of separation, whether the recipient was in a distant colony or the next village. In addition, despite claims to the contrary, correspondence was not exactly like conversation, and writers could not re-weave the fabric of family across distances as neatly as they hoped. Writing took on its own conventions and experiences which were different from, rather than which replicated, a speaking style and a face-to-face relationship. Even choosing topics for letters could underscore diverging lives, as writers struggled with a lack of mutual referent points, knowledge of the recipient’s life, and instant feedback—factors that could be remembered or idealised as features of proximate relationships.²⁶⁷ As Helen Ilbert worried in a letter to her mother from Simla, ‘I wonder if it bores you hearing all about these people you have never seen... but it is so much more comfortable & easy to chatter on about the people one meets every day instead of sticking to generalities.’²⁶⁸

Overall, correspondents positioned the letter as both indispensable and inadequate for producing a space in which to connect with distant relatives. On one hand, letters could enable individuals to express certain feelings or advice that perhaps would be harder to articulate or deliver in person. In this sense, Sarah Crease wrote to her father on his deathbed out of concern for his turn to atheism:

I know not whether those dear ones near you, have ventured to speak of these things to you—but certain I am their hearts are bursting with longings to do so—but very possibly they may lack the *opportunity*—which this long distance gives to me—for well I know—how much

²⁶⁵ BL, Mss Eur 270/1, William Edward Hartt, Emily Hartt to sister Fanny Buck, Rawal Pindee, [21?] March 1883; and BCA, MS-0060, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, vol. 2, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, Victoria, 21 March 1859.

²⁶⁶ BCA, MS-0055, Crease family, box 11, file 1, Sarah Crease to son Lindley Crease, Victoria, 25 August 1878.

²⁶⁷ Sarah Katherine Gibson, ‘Self-Reflection in the Consolidation of Scottish Identity: A Case Study in Family Correspondence,’ in Buckner and Francis, *Canada and the British World*, 30.

²⁶⁸ BL, Mss Eur D594/42, Sir Courtney Peregrine Ilbert, Helen Ilbert to mother Rose Ilbert, Chapslee, 14-15 August 1884.

harder it is to *peak* of what we so deeply feel—than to *write* the same.²⁶⁹

On the other hand, letters were also deemed insufficient for communication and connection. Sometimes relatives urged one another to visit so that they could ‘exchange notes’ since letters could never ‘be able to tell you *all* [the] news.’²⁷⁰ When Tommy Norbury was choosing whether to return to England or stay in British Columbia, for example, he tried to explain his position in a letter to his parents before determining: ‘It is impossible to discuss these matters on paper and I have therefore decided to... come home as soon as everything is satisfactorily arranged and discuss the matter over with you.’²⁷¹

In these letters, then, there is simultaneously an insistent idealisation of correspondence as conversation, and a creeping acknowledgment of uncertainty, anxiety and disappointment when letters only offered this in partial and fleeting ways. Epistolary spaces contained a possibility and an evocation of relationship, but this was one that was always positioned in relation to senses of distance and disjuncture. This, I suggest, offers a more complex imagining of correspondence as both bridges for and barriers to family connection. In taking on this role, letters became a vehicle through which to navigate the limits and the possibilities of separation, empire and distance.

Time and the family letter

Letters also shaped interpretations of time in British Columbia and India. For Pollie Keen, ‘having a letter every week makes the time pass quicker,’ while ‘the time does seem so long, if we don’t get one.’²⁷² It was not just receiving letters that impacted senses of time; according to Keen, writing ‘really seems the one thing that makes the time go by quickly.’²⁷³ For regular correspondents, the week became divided into mail days and writing days: ‘Sunday to write—Wednesday the mail to

²⁶⁹ BCA, MS-0055, Crease family, box 11, file 1, Sarah Crease to father John Lindley, New Westminster, 17 January 1864.

²⁷⁰ BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe Family, vol. 18, file 17, Lucy A. Mathias to cousin C. F. Newcombe, Putney, 6 April 1899.

²⁷¹ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 13, Tommy Norbury to [addressee not named], Fish Lakes, 25 August 1898.

²⁷² BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to sister, Sialkot, 20 April 1890; and BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, [n.d., approximately February 1891].

²⁷³ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 11 October 1891.

look forward to and then Sunday again to write.²⁷⁴ In British Columbia, Mary Moody explained that “Time”... is reckoned by the “Mails.” A typical conversation might sound as follows, she wrote: “How soon are you going away” “Don’t Know exactly, do not think it will be before the 2nd Mail from now.”²⁷⁵ In both sites, the mail day was invested with so much importance that it could dictate the rhythms and nature of local life. Moody lived next to the post office in New Westminster, so she always knew immediately when the mail had arrived, and had a good view onto the proceedings:

we see the letters arrive, the door is locked, crowds assemble outside, in due course of time we see Mr Angelo walk past with a handful of letters for the Governor, then shortly knock at the door and Mr Young, (the Colonial Secretary) comes over with our letters. I rush to the door and have scarcely time to shake hands with him but tell him I only want ‘my letters.’²⁷⁶

Likewise, Helen Ilbert found that ‘the arrival of the mail is the great excitement of the week’ in Simla, while Franklin Kendall described one mail day in Bombay: ‘the Church was by no means full, as people were reading their home letters.’²⁷⁷

Correspondence did not only shape colonial senses of time through its arrival and frequency. In the content of letters, relatives struggled to evoke family affection and relationship in a divided present. Letter-writers described trying to imagine what the recipient was doing in that moment, only to realise that it was another time of day, that the seasons felt strange, and that time meant different things in different places.²⁷⁸ Letters also took a long time to travel between writer and reader. Jane Errington argues that, through correspondence, events of ‘months ago retained their immediacy.’²⁷⁹ However, this was a complicated sort of immediacy, always inflected with the knowledge that distant events and reactions had already moved onward in

²⁷⁴ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, [n.d.] October 1891.

²⁷⁵ BCA, MS-0060, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, vol. 2, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, Victoria, 21 March 1859.

²⁷⁶ BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, letter fragment from Mary Moody, [n.d., begins ‘think of Edinh’]. See also CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, Victoria, 2 June 1862.

²⁷⁷ BL, Mss Eur D594/42, Sir Courtney Peregrine Ilbert, Helen Ilbert to sister-in-law Maye Ilbert, Chapslee, 5 August 1884; and BL, Eur Mss Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 12 October 1863.

²⁷⁸ For example, BL, Eur Mss Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 20 March 1858; BL, Eur Mss Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 16 May 1858; CVA, PR-118, Charles Hayward, diary, Victoria, 1 June 1862; BCA, E/C/W77, H. Leonard Witherby, Leonard Witherby to father, Roccabella, Victoria, 23 April 1899; and for an example from Britain to British Columbia, see CVA, PR-76, Cridge family, file 5, Nellie Cridge to father Edward Cridge, Hastings, 25 July 1895.

²⁷⁹ Errington, ‘Webs of Affection and Obligation,’ 16.

unknown ways. Separation in the present moment also challenged senses of connection as the parameters, membership and meanings of family changed in an individual's absence: children and siblings married and had children of their own; new members entered the family unseen and unknown; and parents grew older. For parents and grandparents, letters were the only way to stay in touch with distant children, but this was found to be a distinctly inadequate medium considering how quickly young children changed and their memories of relatives were forgotten.²⁸⁰ Letters were also the only way of inviting new people into the family circle after a distant marriage.²⁸¹ For families struggling with these issues, discussions of time—and particularly shared pasts and the hopes of shared futures—were positioned as counterpoints to the complications of present distances, working as strategic topics for evoking affective ties and producing meanings of family that could transcend space and time.

Even in families with long histories of separation, letters frequently contained descriptions of specific and general memories of times together, however brief or mundane these had been. Such references to past togetherness allowed writers to ground otherwise vague claims to affection or connection in a concrete time and place.²⁸² For separated siblings in particular, childhood memories could be a particularly important 'touchstone of... social identity' that helped them to give meaning to relationships with one another.²⁸³ In the Beveridge sibling correspondence, for example, coded language and inside jokes reflected what was essentially their own language rooted in apparently close childhood relationships.²⁸⁴ The playful and affectionate language of their shared lives particularly helped them to

²⁸⁰ For example, BL, Mss Eur C176/148, Henry Beveridge, Robert Beveridge to nephew Henry Beveridge, London, 25 November 1857; and BCA, MS-0056, Crease family, file 17, Mary Smith Crease to granddaughter Mary Maberly Crease, London, 22 June 1862. See also Buettner, *Empire Families*, 130-39.

²⁸¹ BCA, MS-0505, Helmcken family, vol. 14, file 2, Catharine Helmcken to daughter-in-law Cecilia Helmcken, London, 12 April 1853; BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 10, file 12, reel A01952, Emily White to sister-in-law Zoe Trutch, [?, in India], 1 April 1871; BCA, E/C/W83, Felicité Caroline (Bayley) Wolfenden, John Bayley to sister Carrie Bayley, Dublin, 19 June 1874; BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Simla, 20 July 1874; BCA, E/C/W83, Felicité Caroline (Bayley) Wolfenden, Cecile Bayley to sister-in-law Carrie Bayley, New Brompton, 13 April 1875; BCA, MS-2436, Victor Robinson, Caroline Robinson to son Ernest Robinson, Leamington, 27 August 1876; BCA, MS-0441, Alben Hawkins, box 1, file 2, Henry Hawkins to brother Alben Hawkins, Tottenham, 16 February 1879; and BL, Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, Emily Hartt to sister Fanny Buck, Delhi, 24 February 1883.

²⁸² Errington, 'Webs of Affection and Obligation,' 11.

²⁸³ Gibson, 'Self Reflection in the Consolidation of Scottish Identity,' 40.

²⁸⁴ For example, BL, Mss Eur C176/162, Henry Beveridge, Phemie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Hampstead, 10 October 1857.

navigate the initial stages of grief after separation, but it also came to represent a potential point of connection for them throughout their lives. In this sense, it continued to act as a reminder of a shared past of affection and duty to one another, a bond that they—especially Maggie and Phemie—represented as too old, sacred and fond to be neglected because of physical distance. However, over time the power of these references faded as their relationships changed, not only due to separation between Britain and India, but also with adulthood, marriage, work and other personal life events. In this context, references to childhood closeness sometimes only highlighted the impact of such dramatic changes in their lives.

Many references to shared memories were grounded in descriptions of landscapes around the family's home. Whether remembered from afar or described from the place in question, these letters worked to produce a space in which separated relatives could imagine themselves together, as if the meanings and identities of family could be situated on a landscape even after its members were not physically present there. By representing 'home' places as something shared, remembered and valued, letter-writers re-confirmed their belonging in a family and a community that was grounded in these places.²⁸⁵

However, inscribing landscapes with meanings laden with absent family and the past could be a difficult balancing act. Relatives remaining in the places in question had to confront their experiences of change and development in these landscapes, which were inscribed and reinscribed with layers of meaning and memory, only some of which related to distant loved ones. Individuals dealt with this balance in different ways. While Phemie Beveridge described constant and sometimes significant changes in the land and community around her childhood home, nearly a decade after her brothers first left for India she still described it as indelibly marked by happy memories of being with Allie and Henry. She referred to places in the nearby country as 'our favourite haunts,' imagining them as occupied by the spiritual or emotional presence of her brothers while also providing specific details as if to transport them there in mind and knowledge, if not in body.²⁸⁶ In

²⁸⁵ For example, BCA, MS-2879, Crease family, box 69, file 1, reel A01839, A. D. Crease to mother Sarah Crease, Haileybury College, 10 October 1886; and BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 7 September 1891.

²⁸⁶ BL, Mss Eur C176/151, Henry Beveridge, Phemie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Culross, 29 June 1865.

writing to his brother Alben in British Columbia, however, Henry Hawkins chose to focus more on the drastically changing landscape in Tottenham:

There wont be many grass fields in Tottenham presently for they are Building houses every were [*sic*] now[.] The man I am working for has put up 160 houses in 18 months and all let[.] I cannot make out where all the people come from... if ever you should come this way... you wont know Tottenham.

He tried to explain these changes in terms that his brother would understand and to which he would be able to connect himself: ‘now he [his employer] has Bought that Field in seven sister Lane where you used to take that old grey horse to work in the pug mill of Bill Kirby we are going to [build] 500 house on that field.’²⁸⁷

The prospect of not being able to recognise home neighbourhoods was a point of significant anxiety for letter-writers in colonial sites, whether or not they intended to return. Like relatives in Britain, these individuals were simultaneously invested in home places of the past and deeply aware of changes over time, even if they were not there to witness them. Epistolary accounts of childhood homes and communities offered a way of ‘updating’ their memories. However, they also had to face unsettling reminders that these places changed rapidly in their absence. David Pringle noted that letters from home were ‘so full & various, that I have to read sentences over again & *pick out* the names, events, births, deaths & marriages’ of people he had once known.²⁸⁸ More agitated, George White found that his sister Jane’s descriptions of home were increasingly unfamiliar to him:

I did not know who was Dean of Ripon do you suppose I carry a Church directory in my head? Fortunately in the ‘Overland Mail’ his bronchitis was noticed but they gave him his alia ‘Dr McNeile’ which put me right at once. Who is your dear little botanical friend? Is it the little minister at Glasnevin? Are the Cushendron[?] House people the Finlays?²⁸⁹

Even as home communities changed, individuals in British Columbia and India tried to maintain involvement and contact, perhaps because they did not want to be forgotten—thereby losing a shared past in which senses of self were grounded—or because it was their duty to distant loved ones to whom they still felt they owed particular forms of behaviour despite distances. Many asked for

²⁸⁷ BCA, MS-0441, Alben Hawkins, box 1, file 2, Henry Hawkins to brother Alben Hawkins, Tottenham, 16 February 1879.

²⁸⁸ BCA, MS-0369, Alexander Pringle, A. D. Pringle to father, Victoria, 10 January 1860.

²⁸⁹ BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, [?], 31 October 1870.

descriptions and ‘home news,’ and requested that their metropolitan correspondents pass on best wishes, news or respects to others.²⁹⁰ Such exchanges enabled them to participate, albeit in a limited way, in family and community life from afar. For those who planned to return to these communities, the exchange of ‘home news’ might facilitate an easier re-integration. However, even for those who did not anticipate returning to Britain, this information could symbolise a sense of continued connection and identity rooted in a place so far away.²⁹¹

Not all letters and letter-writers referred to shared pasts in an attempt to foster connection on common ground in the present. In general, however, correspondents who failed to maintain common referent points—especially those rooted in the past—tended to fall into patterns of infrequent letters that engaged little with the intimate details of one another’s lives in Britain or the colonies. Family, in such cases, was articulated more as an obligation and a safety net defined by crisis rather than as a regular enactment of affective ties through correspondence.

While references to memory or a shared past formed a common strategy for letter-writers seeking to shrink present distances, the future also played an important role in family correspondence. Different families anticipated different kinds of reunions in the future. Those engaged with India feared early death more than those in British Columbia, but regular if temporary reunions were also more likely. Those in the military and civil service could take furloughs, and opportunities for sick leave in Britain—though not ideal—were a real possibility. It was also easier for family members in Britain to travel to India or partway to meet relatives.²⁹²

For families engaged with British Columbia, reunion was a more difficult prospect. Many travelling to the colony went as permanent settlers, and while they may have hoped to return to Britain to visit, or told their relatives that they would try, this was a very difficult, long and expensive procedure in practice. Even after the trans-Canada railway was completed in the mid-1880s, the journey was not undertaken often. Especially without the institutional frameworks of furlough and leave that shaped Anglo-Indian cycles of mobility, visits were less anticipated though

²⁹⁰ For example, BL, Mss Eur F455/1, Lt.-Col. Alexander Hervey Blackwood Bruce, Alick Bruce to sister Jane Alexander, [?], 10 July 1860; and BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 12 May 1865.

²⁹¹ Errington, ‘Webs of Affection and Obligation,’ 10.

²⁹² For example, BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Simla, 23 September 1896.

still much hoped-for in British Columbia. However, British Columbia also had a heavy influx of prospectors with its gold rushes, many of whom planned to return to family in Britain after striking it rich. Although this could eventually prove unattractive or impossible, these families often continued to await reunion.²⁹³

The correspondence of families who anticipated reunion, as well as that of those who found it unlikely but still longed for it, frequently returned to future plans and hopes. These expressions offered another way of grappling with present separations by imagining togetherness in a different temporal context. For example, William Hartt asked his future sister-in-law to report on theatre, music and other activities in London to 'make me work the harder, to be in a position sooner, to leave the country with a competency to enjoy those pleasures with you all.'²⁹⁴ These were usually optimistic letters suggesting things would largely manifest as remembered, or even better. Letter-writers claimed that they would put family first, eagerly hoping to see everyone and rarely discussing that it might be difficult to relate after so long and after such different experiences. As Alick Bruce declared when he imagined a return to England, 'I should make a point of calling on all my relations.'²⁹⁵

For relatives who acknowledged that reunion was unlikely, letters instead included hopes and promises of reunion after death. In one sense, these sentiments read as largely stylised and impersonal assurances, often directly quoting scripture rather than offering individual readings of such quotations or ideas. In another sense, although it is impossible to tell what such expressions meant to individuals in terms of their own faith, these letters could offer deeply felt claims to future family togetherness as another strategy for navigating separation in the present.²⁹⁶

Etiquette, expectation and advice in epistolary families

When family correspondence evoked connection across disjunctures of time and space, it contributed to a broader project of translating family affection and duty into epistolary forms. Since separated relationships depended on letter-writing for their continued development and enactment, Britons suggested that levels of intimacy could be read into the style of correspondence. In this sense, their

²⁹³ See BCA, MS-2112, Evans family, letters from John Evans to children.

²⁹⁴ BL, Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, William Hartt to future sister-in-law Fanny Buck, [?], 3 January 1883.

²⁹⁵ BL, Mss Eur F455/1, Lt.-Col. Alexander Hervey Blackwood Bruce, Alick Bruce to sister Jane Alexander, Calpee, 3 May 1859.

²⁹⁶ For example, BCA, MS-1963, Jane Fawcett, reel A01358, Jane Fawcett to sisters, Victoria, 5 October 1863.

instructions, complaints and other discussions of letter-writing practices helped to define a new etiquette of family at a distance.

Writing regular and adequate letters quickly became framed as a duty of family and a reflection on the quality of one's relationship. When an acquaintance in British Columbia only received one letter from relatives after she moved, Mary Moody declared to her sister, 'It is a *great shame*... it is really *very wrong* of them not to write.'²⁹⁷ When relatives discussed the exchange of correspondence, they did so in the language of 'owing' and 'deserving,' and its frequency was imagined as a material and emotional sign of continued relationship.²⁹⁸ Letters that only came 'like Angel visits—far between' could suggest that one had been forgotten by family members.²⁹⁹ To this end, Tommy Norbury grumbled to his mother that his brother, Coni, 'appears of late to have forgotten his relation in these parts,' while John Christie mourned in his diary, 'Since I received my B[rother] W[illia]ms Letter last year I have had no word from Scotland so I am pretty much forgot by them all.'³⁰⁰ Acknowledging this point, Margaret Percy was reassured that her letters would serve as '*proof* that I was not forgetting you.'³⁰¹

Relatives responded with deep hurt, snippy sarcasm or even aggressive anger when they felt that they had received only 'very shabby letters,' or worse, not enough letters.³⁰² George White, for example, complained to his sister Jane, 'You idle people at home have nothing to do and you ought to write twice as long letters as you do. I am only one whereas you have a relief of 4 or 5 at least.'³⁰³ Likewise, James Douglas scolded his daughter Martha four months after her departure from Victoria for school in England, complaining that he had only received two letters in that time. Although, as was often the case, the problem turned out to be with the inconsistent British Columbian postal service, such passages hinted at a relative's apparent lack of

²⁹⁷ BCA, MS-0060, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, vol. 2, Mary Moody to sister Emily, Victoria, [n.d., 'Good Friday']. See also BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 1 August 1891.

²⁹⁸ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 26 June 1858; and BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe family, vol. 18, file 17, Lucy A. Mathias to cousin C. F. Newcombe, Putney, 6 April 1899.

²⁹⁹ BCA, MS-2797, John Brough, John Brough to sister Catherine, Mary Hill, 24 December 1863.

³⁰⁰ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 10, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fish Lakes, 4 May 1895; and BCA, MS-0142, John Christie, diary entry, [n.p.], 28 July 1861.

³⁰¹ BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady (Margaret) Josceline Percy to daughter-in-law Ellen Grant, London, 23 December 1875.

³⁰² BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, box 1, folder 2, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch to brother John Birch, New Westminster, 11 June 1864.

³⁰³ BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Jullundur, 15 January 1860.

concern for or failure of duty in the family. In another such instance, Douglas appears to have tried to push or shame his daughter into writing more often by illustrating his anxieties and expectations through a moving description of a dream: 'I was dreaming of you the other night. You came running into the house and with open arms towards Papa, exclaiming "O! Papa I am so sorry." More I did not hear. I suppose you were sorry for not writing oftener?'³⁰⁴ In these situations, dreams were a common technique used to articulate emotions (in this case, disappointment and loss) and to evoke them in the reader (in this case, guilt or shame, and a wider sense of family or filial duty).

It was not only the frequency and length of letters that were associated with quality of epistolary relationship. Style also mattered, despite George White's reassurances to his sister Fanny that, 'altho' brothers can afford to make light of "notes" when near the ancestral abode[,] at such a distance... I am too glad to hear to take time to consider the style.'³⁰⁵ Demonstrating a concern both for 'proper' letter-writing and for his role as a father at a distance, James Douglas devoted much space to instructing and criticising the penmanship, style and content of letters that he received from his daughter Martha. He scolded her, 'Your letters are less carefully written than I could wish; the style is not bad, tho' there are many inaccuracies. The writing is rapidly degenerating into a sprawling hand, looking for all the world, as if the letters were trying to run away from each other.'³⁰⁶ In one instance, he even returned part of one of her letters, 'pruned of redundancies, as a study. Observe,' he wrote, 'how it is improved by the process.'³⁰⁷ Not all of his advice was critical, as he also praised her for well-written letters: 'How neatly your letter is written, with no blots and no omissions, this is as letters should be. Pray always write so.'³⁰⁸

While Douglas's advice focused on correspondence, other letter-writers advised distant relatives about behaviour beyond epistolary style. In offering this advice, parents, siblings and other relations used correspondence as a vehicle through which to define and carry out forms of obligations to one another at a distance. In so doing, they sought to maintain and confirm their places in the family's affective,

³⁰⁴ James Douglas in Lamb, 'Letters to Martha,' 38.

³⁰⁵ BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Jullundur, 10 April 1868. See also BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, box 1, folder 2, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch to brother John Birch, New Westminster, 7 May 1864.

³⁰⁶ James Douglas in Lamb, 'Letters to Martha,' 37.

³⁰⁷ James Douglas in Lamb, 'Letters to Martha,' 37.

³⁰⁸ James Douglas in Lamb, 'Letters to Martha,' 37.

economic and social networks. However, they also necessarily encountered frustrations, anxieties and difficulties in advising relatives living in distant and different places, and as such they had to translate their familial advice not only into text, but also into forms appropriate to their understandings of specific imperial contexts.³⁰⁹

Sisters and mothers especially sought to act as moral guides and advisors for young men who, in their framing, might otherwise be led astray in unfamiliar environments far from the watchful eyes of family. This advice concerned everything from vague, general comments about carrying oneself appropriately to more specific, detailed admonishments about particular situations.³¹⁰ In one early letter to her brother Henry, for example, Maggie Beveridge informed him that she had received a letter from a mutual acquaintance about his ‘on-goings’ in India. She described these for him: ‘how you are going off at the nail with yourself with Pride and how you are called *Sir* (!) by that foolish old woman Mrs Martin, & *letting her do it*.’ She then scolded him for such behaviour, suggesting that her knowledge of his actions—a surveillance from afar—might be enough to steer him back toward a moral, modest way of life: ‘I desist from making any further observations suffice it *Sir* that self... [is] aware of your behaviour & [has] an eye upon you.’³¹¹ Advice was not solely the purview of mothers and sisters, as fathers and brothers also offered extensive recommendations and guidance, particularly with respect to finances, business arrangements, careers and marriages.³¹²

Sometimes family advice was specifically related to conditions in India or British Columbia, as letter-writers used their understandings of colonial places and lives in order to underscore issues that might be of major concern for respectable family members there. For example, John Bayley’s letters express worries that his

³⁰⁹ Errington, ‘Webs of Affection and Obligation,’ 20.

³¹⁰ For an example of general advice, see BCA, MS-0657, Fisher family, mother [E. Fisher?] to son [William Fisher?], n.p. [Blandford], 3 March 1892.

³¹¹ BL, Mss Eur C176/162, Henry Beveridge, Maggie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Belfast, [n.d., ‘Thursday morning’].

³¹² For examples in the Newcombe family correspondence, see BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe family, vol. 18, file 4, W. L. Newcombe to son C. F. Newcombe, Invernan, 6 May 1899; BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe Family, vol. 18, file 5, Charles P. H. Newcombe to father C. F. Newcombe, Melvill House [Haileybury], 15 June 1899; and BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe Family, vol. 18, file 5, Charles P. H. Newcombe to father C. F. Newcombe, London, 18 January 1900. For other examples, see BL, Mss Eur C492, Captain Herbert Sconce, Herbert Sconce to sister Sally Bunbury, Upper Assam, 9 August 1858; BL, Mss Eur C492, Captain Herbert Sconce, Herbert Sconce to sister Sally Bunbury, North Cachar, 17 February 1859; and BL, Mss Eur C176/152, Henry Beveridge, Allie Beveridge to mother Jemima Beveridge, [?], 17 July 1865.

sister, Carrie, would not make good marital choices on her own in Victoria. These passages reflected general advice about marriage ('don't select anyone simply on account of his good looks or oily tongue'), and his own anxieties about his role and responsibilities as her guardian at a distance. At the same time, this advice was inflected with his concerns about Vancouver Island's gender imbalance in the white population. He warned Carrie that in such a context, she would be popular with 'those stupid asses of navy officers... because there are few young ladies on the Island, and they have so much time on their hands, there is nothing else to do, for amusement but spooning girls.' He concluded this letter with hopes that she would continue to act as a 'real credit to the family,' leaving very little doubt as to what that would entail.³¹³ Metropolitan advice for Anglo-Indians often focused on climate and marriage. In an early letter to her brother, Phemie Beveridge, for example, made liberal use of underlining to warn Henry: '*remember*, you are in a *strange*, a new and a *dangerous* climate, so therefore old boy be careful.' She then continued, 'don't be taken with... any of them white roses at Calcutta, remember the brighter ones growing up for you *at home*, and take not unto yourself a wife of the daughters of a strange land.'³¹⁴ In such letters, relatives grappled with expectations that they would provide certain kinds of advice to one another, offering guidance that they hoped would apply across distances and in relation to their concerns about specific places. In this way, they used correspondence as a vehicle for performing and reworking perceived family duties to one another.

Empire, family, letter-writing

A number of scholars have argued persuasively that letters of all kinds bound together sites of empire in their production, transmission and reception. Ian Steele, for example, describes the English Atlantic as a 'paper empire,' while Eve Tavor Bannet argues that 'letters made the empire work.'³¹⁵ Government, war and business were conducted through correspondence, while letters also facilitated the growth of imperial identities and connections between disparate sites. To this end, near the end of the nineteenth century, Conservative MP John Henniker Heaton recognised the

³¹³ BCA, E/C/W83, Felicité Caroline (Bayley) Wolfenden, John Bayley to sister Carrie Bayley, Dublin, 19 June 1874.

³¹⁴ BL, Mss Eur C176/151, Henry Beveridge, Phemie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Haverstock Hill, 17 May 1858.

³¹⁵ Ian Kenneth Steele, *English Atlantic, 1675-1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 265; and Bannet, *Empire of Letters*, x. See also Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 11.

symbolic as well as the functional power of epistolary connections, arguing that the new Imperial Penny Post would 'become the symbol of Imperial unity.'³¹⁶ Improved postal networks stretching across the empire were imagined as bringing metropole and colony closer, with political, military and social advantage.³¹⁷

Family letters played an important role in this process by communicating information, ideas, affections and interactions along personal networks. While not wholly able to shrink the separations of empire in hearts and minds, correspondence could at least partially produce them as intimate, familiar and familial spaces—the work for and of family. In the process, the ties between metropole and colony tightened, at least momentarily, as Britons lived and imagined empire in personal, emotional and intimate terms through the family letter.

Family correspondence helped to make empire understandable and palatable in part by producing particular forms of colonial knowledge and transmitting them between sites of empire. In so doing, letters not only reflected, but also shaped how India and British Columbia were understood in Britain, offering both confirmation of and challenges to more widely disseminated images in metropolitan fiction and the press, as well as in business, scholarly and political discussions. Families involved in India had access to prolific and anxious representations of this place from other sources. For them, family letters could offer more detailed, more mundane or more personal insights into this picture. Letters written in the aftermath of the Rebellion, for example, provided personal narratives that brought the sensational news stories closer and offered further details based on individual experiences, while also reassuring relatives that India was safe.³¹⁸ Correspondence could also become a personal form of travel literature as it detailed the exciting and exotic encounters of a loved one.³¹⁹

³¹⁶ J. Henniker Heaton, 'A Penny Post for the Empire,' *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review* 27, 160 (June 1890): 917.

³¹⁷ Heaton, 'Penny Post for the Empire'; and Katie-Louise Thomas, 'Racial Alliance and Postal Networks in Conan Doyle's "A Study in Scarlet,"' *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 2, 1 (Spring 2001): para. 3.

³¹⁸ For example, BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 232, James Sutcliffe, James Sutcliffe to mother, Galle, 16 March 1858; BL, F142/61, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, letters from Jardy Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, 1857-1858; BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 20 March 1858; and BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 16 May 1858.

³¹⁹ BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady (Margaret) Josceline Percy to son Charles Grant, London, 21 January 1876; and BL, Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, William Hartt to future sister-in-law Fanny Buck, [?], 3 January 1883.

For Britons with relatives in British Columbia, letters were sometimes the only conduit of information about the place, given that this ‘edge of empire’ penetrated metropolitan imaginations to a much lesser degree than did India. Early writing from British Columbia tended to focus on articulating and navigating an overwhelming sense of distance and difference, especially through descriptions of the land with its high horizons, unknown expanses and undeveloped townsites.³²⁰ For those in the metropole, such descriptions of British Columbia gave colour and image to a distant land, becoming one key path by which knowledge about the colony was produced and imagined.

For both India and British Columbia, family letters could also offer important information about the possibilities of migration, settlement and employment.³²¹ While some analyses of immigrant letters have focused on their role in encouraging chain migration, much of family correspondence did little to promote a positive imagination of imperial places, and indeed often actively discouraged it. Letters from British Columbia informed loved ones at home that migration was not worth the risk, that living conditions were unbearable and that few men were able to recover their costs. During the Cariboo gold rush, John Brough warned that the goldfields were no place for men seeking to ‘make their fortune,’ but rather were only appropriate for those who already had access to some money.³²² At the turn of the century, Harold Nation complained to his mother about the lack of available employment, particularly after the railway ‘brought in the cheap men by the hundred.’ ‘For goodness sake,’ he wrote, ‘don’t advise any friends to send their sons out.’³²³

These letters contradicted, often explicitly, newspaper reports and immigration brochures, which were otherwise the primary sources of information about British Columbia available in Britain. As Alan Conway’s work illustrates,

³²⁰ For example, BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe family, vol. 18, file 1, Charles Newcombe to wife Marian Newcombe, Victoria, 5 October 1883; BCA, MS-1463, Alexander Charles Harris, reel A00674, diary, Ashcroft, [n.d.]; and BCA, MS-1965, Julia Rachel Stevens Price Bullock-Webster, reel A01391(1), diary, [travelling], especially August 1894.

³²¹ Yves Frenette and Gabriele Scardellato, ‘The Immigrant Experience and the Creation of a Transatlantic Epistolary Space: A Case Study,’ in *More than Words: Essays in Transport, Communication and the History of Postal Communication*, ed. John Willis (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2007), 193.

³²² BCA, MS-2797, John Brough, John Brough to brother James Brough, New Westminster, 16 April 1866.

³²³ BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to mother, [n.p.], 29 October 1900. See also BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, box 1, folder 2, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch to brother John Birch, New Westminster, 7 May 1864.

discontented Welsh miners railed against glowing reports of British Columbian goldfields in the press—reports that many came to suspect were scams. One such miner wrote, ‘I believe if the correspondent of the Times were here now, that those letters which he caused to be published in the English newspapers would cost him his neck.’³²⁴ Another explained, ‘If the Times correspondent was here, many would make sharp work of him; he resided in this place but is now, I expect, in London, writing Articles on British Columbia... He would be made an example of... for writing such articles to delude people from their homes.’³²⁵ Likewise, Alexander Papley warned his siblings in Stromness, ‘the gold mines his [*sic*] not the thing that it his [*sic*] reported to be for one man that makes any thing good then his [*sic*] ten that comes Back with nothing and you may think the Orknes his [*sic*] a poor place but I believe it his [*sic*] a better place for a man to Settle.’³²⁶ Roger Hicks encountered problems while trying to reach the Klondike goldfields, writing to his daughters, ‘The lies that appear in the few Victoria & Canadian papers one sees here are too bad, one reads reports praising up the route & saying that men & pack trains are going daily out to Teslin, where as nothing, or at any rate very little is being done.’³²⁷ These letter-writers situated themselves as on-the-ground experts about British Columbia, in a position to transmit ‘real’ information about life and work there in order to counter the ‘lies’ published in the press. In this way, family correspondence became a critical counter-source on British Columbia as a place and a destination for Britons, producing a form of knowledge that gained credibility through its personal, trusted nature.

Migration advice about India tended to be more focused on the possibilities of a relative’s employment in the civil service or the military, with Anglo-Indians offering tips based on personal experience that might help more than official information. In response to his sister’s questions regarding her son’s potential future in India, for example, Herbert Sconce informed Sally:

I fear you will have a great deal of trouble in finding a profession for Harry, if so many branches are ‘out of the question.’ There is nothing but *fighting*, *ruling* and *tea planting* in India. I have tried the two first &

³²⁴ Gold-miner from Aberdare to wife and children, Victoria, 23 July 1862; published in the *Merthyr Telegraph*, 13 September 1862; republished in Conway, ‘Welsh Gold-Miners in British Columbia,’ 60.

³²⁵ William Jones to parents, Victoria, 28 July 1862; published in the *Merthyr Telegraph*, 4 October 1862; republished in Conway, ‘Welsh Gold-Miners in British Columbia,’ 61. See also CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, Victoria, 8 October 1862.

³²⁶ BCA, A/E/P19, Papley family, Alexander Papley to brothers and sisters, Nanaimo, 22 June 1867.

³²⁷ BCA, MS-2167, T. Roger C. Hicks, Roger Hicks to daughters, Cañon Stikine River, 18 May 1898.

shall attempt the third some day. The first requires a good constitution, the second a love for hard work & the third a combination of both qualities.³²⁸

A later letter outlined in more detail how his nephew might go about getting a position, what he should pack, and which pieces of official advice could be ignored.³²⁹

Just as family was never simple and static in physical proximity, epistolary relationships across imperial spaces were also complicated, fragile and fraught. The form, style, frequency, content and symbolism of correspondence enabled families to evoke connection and relationship at a distance, to perform duties to one another, and to express affections, anxieties and occasionally conflict. Struggling against the possibilities and experiences of disconnection, letter-writers sought to build and maintain senses of family by reimagining space, time, duty and emotion, sometimes in broadly similar ways and other times in relation to specific places. In the process, the meanings of family, distance and imperial places became layered onto one another through the letter. The rest of this thesis is concerned with the ways in which Britons used the content of correspondence to navigate this entangled relationship between family, empire and place in everyday experiences and in moments of emotional rupture. While letter-writers used a range of strategies to articulate connection, intimacy and relationship in correspondence, their encounters with food, dress and death offer specific lenses onto the ways in which this worked between Britain and British Columbia or India.

³²⁸ BL, Mss Eur C492, Captain Herbert Sconce, Herbert Sconce to sister Sally Bunbury, Upper Assam, 9 August 1858.

³²⁹ BL, Mss Eur C492, Captain Herbert Sconce, Herbert Sconce to sister Sally Bunbury, North Cachar, 17 February 1859.

Chapter 3. 'The Batchelor Out West': Letters about Food and Family in British Columbia

The Christmas 1881 edition of the London *Graphic* included a page of six images collectively entitled 'Christmas in British Columbia' [see *Figure 1*]. The top drawing depicted settlers 'bartering for the Christmas dinner' with indigenous traders, offering items like European-style shirts for moose heads, beaver, geese and fish. Below that followed a drawing of two men surrounded by snow, 'hoisting the British flag' on Christmas morning. Then followed three images of the men attempting to make themselves a Christmas pudding. Cooking in a small cabin, they used an axe as a utensil, but ultimately failed, with the pudding turning out 'rather raw and indigestible.' The last image was of a 'half-breed ball,' depicted as a wild dance, especially on the part of the main male figure who was almost animal in appearance.³³⁰ Taken together, these drawings presented an exoticised narrative of colonial difference to the *Graphic's* audience. Even as the British men were depicted as clinging to markers of 'home,' their holiday was in every way a collision with the differences of race, culture and environment in this new place. Moreover, at a time when Christmas was increasingly idealised in metropolitan popular imagery as a family event, 'Christmas in British Columbia' fundamentally challenged these connections. Here, images of Christmas day were characterised by a distinct lack of family, perhaps most of all in the drawings of the holiday meal cooked, eaten and suffered by an isolated pair of men.

In their family correspondence, Britons in British Columbia wrote similar descriptions of Christmas celebrations, focusing on an uncomfortable balance between memories of a distant home and the realities of a colonial present. In these letters, the Christmas meal represented a particular point of emotional condensation around which converged settler anxieties about distance, difference, family and home. However, it was not only holiday meals that highlighted British concerns with British Columbia, as settlers also wrote extensively about food in everyday contexts. Their letters, like the *Graphic* drawings, used food to explore tensions between claims

³³⁰ 'Christmas in British Columbia,' London *Graphic*, 31 December 1881.

to Britishness and British Columbian challenges to these. Food was used to illustrate some of the key differences encountered in the colonial setting, especially with respect to its significant gender imbalance among the settler population and its difficult, unfamiliar and sparsely inhabited environment. Here, settlers faced the challenges of acquiring their own food, whether by hunting and gathering it themselves or by paying exorbitant prices in an unreliable and difficult market. They encountered new foods that could sometimes replicate familiar British dishes, and that other times became associated with their new colonial home. In addition, British men learned to cook for themselves in the absence of female relatives or women whom they saw as eligible partners. Such everyday experiences with food were explained in terms of a British and family identity under siege in largely bachelor and backwoods British Columbia. This chapter suggests that these epistolary discussions of food—especially descriptions of local foods, bachelor cooking and the Christmas dinner—took on particular significance and anxiety for British Columbian settlers, as they positioned the topic as representing or reflecting key aspects of their everyday lives. As such, food might be understood as a key lens through which British families encountered, explained and understood British Columbia as a specific colonial place. At the same time, letters about food also enabled settlers to articulate new configurations of expert knowledge and relationships between individuals in the family, as the British Columbian context called for a reimagining of the connections between food and family with respect both to gendered expectations of food preparation and to family practices of eating together. In these ways, correspondence about food and cooking formed an important part of a wider epistolary negotiation of what it meant to be a British family engaged with nineteenth-century British Columbia.

Conceptualising food

Recent decades have seen a proliferation of scholarly work on food in society, beginning in earnest with structuralist anthropologists in the 1960s seeking the underlying structures and overarching meanings of food systems.³³¹ At the heart

³³¹ For example, Roland Barthes, 'Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption,' originally published in *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 16 (September-October 1961): 977-86, and republished in *Food and Drink in History: Selections from the Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, vol. 5, ed. Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, trans. Elborg Forster and Patricia M. Ranum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 166-73; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (originally published in 1964; this

of this work was the notion that food was a metaphor for wider social relations or, as Mary Douglas suggested, that ‘food categories... encode social events.’³³² By the 1980s, scholars from a range of disciplines had begun to push for a deeper awareness of historical change in this relationship between food and society, moving from the search for universal meanings of food structures to studies that engaged with the place of food in particular historical contexts.³³³ Since then, sociologists, anthropologists and, more recently, historians have increasingly emphasised the socially constructed nature of food practices, food’s role in identity formation and expression, and its place as a sign and symbol for relationships shaped by context.³³⁴ This balance between the power of food to act as a metaphor for social relations and its grounding in specific historical circumstances is crucial to how I frame food in this chapter. I see food as both a symbol and a practice of social relations deeply embedded in historical and personal contexts. More specifically, I highlight four points: first, ways of thinking and talking about, as well as preparing and consuming, food are socially and historically situated processes; second, for nineteenth-century British letter-writers, these were intimately linked with the family as well as to other contexts; third, such links between food and family were tied up in questions of identity and belonging; and fourth, changes in food practices, family relationships and larger social contexts could thus become entangled in one another.

translation, London: Cape, 1970); Claude Lévi-Strauss, ‘The Culinary Triangle,’ originally published in *Partisan Review* 33 (1965): 586-95, and republished in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (London: Routledge, 1997), 28-35; Mary Douglas, ‘Deciphering a Meal,’ originally published in *Daedalus* 101 (Winter 1972): 61-81, and republished in Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings: Selected Essays in Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1999), 231-51; and Mary Douglas, ‘Food as a System of Communication,’ chapter 4 in *In the Active Voice* (London: Routledge, 1982).

³³² Douglas, ‘Deciphering a Meal,’ 231.

³³³ For example, Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985); Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1985); and Sidney W. Mintz, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past* (Boston: Beacon, 1996).

³³⁴ Historians were relatively slow to take up the insights of anthropologists and sociologists; early work on food in historical research was primarily concerned with nutritional studies, population analysis and other quantitative questions. See Diane Kirkby, Tanja Luckins and Barbara Santich, ‘Introduction: Of Turtles, Dining and the Importance of History in Food, Food in History,’ in *Dining on Turtles: Food Feasts and Drinking in History*, ed. Diane Kirkby and Tanja Luckins (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 3 and on; and Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, ‘Introduction,’ in Forster and Ranum, *Food and Drink in History*, vol. 5, vii-xiii. On food and identity, see, for example, Claude Fischler, ‘Food, Self and Identity,’ *Social Science Information* 27, 2 (June 1988): 275-92; Deborah Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self* (London: Sage, 1996); Pat Caplan, ed., *Food, Health and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1997); Peter Scholliers, ed., *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); and Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton, eds., *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies* (London: Routledge, 2002). For an overview of these developments, see Warren Belasco, *Food: The Key Concepts* (Oxford: Berg, 2008).

Such arguments about the historical connections between food and wider social relations have not been taken up with much enthusiasm by historians of food in Victorian Britain. There is a tradition of rich empirical work on the topic, but most of these studies do not engage with broader conceptual concerns or the historical implications of particular food practices.³³⁵ Work on British food and empire has been an exception to this, beginning with Sidney Mintz's classic 1985 work on sugar.³³⁶ These studies raise critical questions about the role of food in spurring imperial expansion and linking colony and metropole. They especially trace the ways in which imperial food practices were grounded in relations of power and the politics of production and consumption, as goods were moved and people were enslaved to satisfy changing British food tastes. Most of this literature focuses on the eighteenth-century consumption of specific imperial foods in the metropole, with much less attention paid to the links between food and identity among Britons in the empire.³³⁷

In this chapter, I take up the latter point by probing British negotiations of the meanings of food in a colonial British Columbian context. In so doing, I work in part from the insights of scholars who situate food as central to forming and expressing identity. As Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin famously declared, 'Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are.' More recently, Claude Fischler has suggested that eating involves incorporating food into the self, moving it from outside to inside, which is a process 'laden with meaning.'³³⁸ At the same time, the choices, shapes and forms of food practices occupy a key place in self-identity and the identification of others by marking boundaries of similarity and difference that both separate and bond groups.³³⁹ In a growing interdisciplinary scholarship,

³³⁵ For example, John Burnett, *Plenty and Want: A Social History of Food in England from 1815 to the Present Day* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1966); Sarah Freeman, *Mutton and Oysters: The Victorians and their Food* (London: Gollancz, 1989); Andrea Broomfield, *Food and Cooking in Victorian England: A History* (London: Praeger, 2007); and Kate Colquhoun, *Taste: The Story of Britain through its Cooking* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007).

³³⁶ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*. See also Woodruff D. Smith, 'Complications of the Commonplace: Tea, Sugar and Imperialism,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, 2 (Autumn 1992): 259-78; James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660-1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997); and Troy Bickham, 'Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth-Century Britain,' *Past and Present* 198, 1 (2008): 71-109.

³³⁷ There has been some attention paid to British experiences with food in India, as discussed in the final section of this chapter. See David Burton, *The Raj at Table: A Culinary History of the British in India* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993); K. T. Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994); Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*; and Lizzie Collingham, *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors* (London: Vintage, 2005).

³³⁸ Fischler, 'Food, Self and Identity,' 277.

³³⁹ Gerald Mars and Valerie Mars, 'Introduction: Food in Culture and History,' in *Food, Culture & History*, vol. 1, ed. Gerald Mars and Valerie Mars (London: London Food Seminar, 1993), 11.

researchers link food and identity in a range of complex and interconnected ways, considering its relationship with class, nation, gender, ethnicity and the body. While these are important to my study, I am particularly influenced by the literature on identity, migration and food, which offers some insights into the ways that people use food to renegotiate the meanings of self and home in new contexts.³⁴⁰

Anthropologist Sara Delamont emphasises that people carry food symbolism—cultural and familial food baggage—with them as they travel, while John Plotz argues that objects and practices, including food-related ones, could act as ‘repositories of mobile memory’ for Britons in the empire, symbolising consumable connections with home at a distance.³⁴¹ Indeed, the symbolism of ‘home’ foods take on most importance outside of the place identified as home. In his study of contemporary Indian cookbooks, Arjun Appadurai comments that these publications ‘appear to belong to the literature of exile, of nostalgia and loss,’ often written by or for Indian populations outside of the country.³⁴² In their examination of Robbie Burns feasts in Scotland, England, Australia and India in the nineteenth century, Alex Tyrrell, Patricia Hill and Diane Kirkby make a similar point, arguing that ‘distinctively national forms of feasting have more significance for exiles than for those who remain in the mother country.’³⁴³ These observations cut to the core of one of my central ideas: discourses around food can be powerful reminders and symbols of home—particularly a home imagined from a position of distance and nostalgia—that speak to deeper concerns about place, belonging, connection and identity for those far from homelands.

Also at the heart of this chapter is the notion that there are strong emotional and imagined links between food and the family. In many cases, the meanings assigned to food are connected with particular understandings and experiences of family relationships, as well as to related questions about home, identity and place. As Mary Douglas suggests, ‘Food is... the medium through which a system of

³⁴⁰ For example, Anne J. Kershen, ed., *Food in the Migrant Experience* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

³⁴¹ Sara Delamont, *Appetites and Identities: An Introduction to the Social Anthropology of Western Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), 26; and John Plotz, ‘The First Strawberries in India: Cultural Portability in Victorian Greater Britain,’ *Victorian Studies* 49, 4 (Summer 2007): 660.

³⁴² Arjun Appadurai, ‘How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India,’ *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, 1 (January 1988): 18.

³⁴³ Alex Tyrrell, Patricia Hill and Diane Kirkby, ‘Feasting on National Identity: Whisky, Haggis and the Celebration of Scottishness in the Nineteenth Century,’ in Kirkby and Luckins, *Dining on Turtles*, 52. For another exploration of the navigation of national identity and ‘home’ in imperial contexts, including through St. Andrew’s Day dinners, see Elizabeth Buettner, ‘Haggis in the Raj: Private and Public Celebrations of Scottishness in Late Imperial India,’ *Scottish Historical Review* 81, 2, no. 212 (October 2002): 212–39.

relationships within the family is expressed.³⁴⁴ On a general level, food practices reflect and order configurations of gender, power, ritual and the everyday within the family. In addition, each family produces its own cultures of food, contributing to the development of a specific family identity represented in part by its food practices, memories and traditions. However, while the evocation of family through particular food practices can be powerful, the meanings of food are constantly negotiated, contested and reproduced, calling up multiple strands of identity and experience.³⁴⁵ Indeed, family food worlds have permeable boundaries, developed and reworked in dialogue with larger social contexts.³⁴⁶ In other words, just as the family is not a unified and static unit, food too is not a stagnant symbol with universal meaning. Rather, in this chapter I am interested in particular crystallisations of food-family links in letters, and the ways in which these were framed, expressed and articulated in specific contexts.

In the nineteenth-century British world, the links between food and family were both powerful and complex. Eating was typically idealised around a notion of commensality, with the family meal taking on importance in imagination and memory.³⁴⁷ However, in lived experience, many of these families probably did not eat together often. In working-class Victorian households, the family usually only ate some meals together, with those in the workforce eating at, or in transit to and from, work.³⁴⁸ In middle- and upper-class households, while the adults probably ate together, children more often ate different foods and at separate times in the nursery.³⁴⁹ As they grew older, boys were often sent to boarding schools, and thus would only have experienced a 'family meal' on their return at holidays. Thus, the experience of a meal consumed together by the family was certainly not ubiquitous in Victorian British society. Nonetheless, the central place and evocative language of food in British Columbian correspondence suggests that there were still strong imagined links between food, family and identity. Despite a potential lack of experience with commensality, these writers still linked food with particular

³⁴⁴ Douglas, 'Food as a System of Communication,' 86.

³⁴⁵ Bickham, 'Eating the Empire,' 81.

³⁴⁶ Douglas, 'Food as a System of Communication,' 87; and Gill Valentine, 'Eating In: Home, Consumption and Identity,' *Sociological Review* 47, 3 (August 1999): 496.

³⁴⁷ Alex McIntosh, 'The Family Meal and its Significance in Global Times,' in *Food in Global History*, ed. Raymond Grew (Oxford: Westview, 1999), 220.

³⁴⁸ Colquhoun, *Taste*, 288-89.

³⁴⁹ Valerie Mars, 'Parsimony amid Plenty: Views from Victorian Didactic Works on Food for Nursery Children,' vol. 1, in Mars and Mars, *Food, Culture & History*, 155; and McIntosh, 'The Family Meal,' 222.

meanings of family, home, self and place when confronted with the realities of a separated family and unfamiliar colonial food practices.

‘Fruit that Covent Garden never dreamt of: producing family knowledge of British Columbian food

In 1862, Harry Guillod sent his mother a description of his brief career as a gold-miner in the Cariboo region:

Our time for working was generally from six in the morning till half past five. We lived on bread and meat, making our bread with sour dough and baking it in the ashes. We got cheap meat, such as tongue, bullocks heart, or shin of beef, and without sugar or any other luxury, it cost us between five and six pounds per week to keep two of us.³⁵⁰

British immigrants like Guillod encountered new foods and food practices in British Columbia, as acquiring, preparing and eating meals were all shaped by differences in local conditions, markets and ingredients. In a context where even accessing food, let alone cooking it, could be difficult and unfamiliar, food came to stand as a central symbol of what everyday life entailed in British Columbia. Descriptions of dishes, meal sizes and times, cooking strategies and dining etiquette helped to define the meanings of British Columbian food, which in turn illustrated wider points about the daily rhythms of life, labour conditions, local markets and relationships with the environment. As suggested by this passage from Guillod’s writing, correspondence enabled separated families to produce and transmit this knowledge. In so doing, the meanings assigned to particular foods or food practices—whether as similar or different, familiar or unfamiliar—helped to configure relationships between Britain and British Columbia, as settlers sought to emulate British food practices in order to carve out a sense of home in an unfamiliar place, or to use food as a marker of their new British Columbian selves that distinguished them from distant relatives.

Harry Guillod’s description of gold-rush food emphasised points of difference between his life and that of his middle-class metropolitan family: baking bread in the ashes of a campfire, eating only the cheapest meats and forsaking all forms of ‘luxury.’ However, meat and bread were both dishes that could be generally understood by his mother, even if they were acquired and cooked in different ways. Other British Columbian foods required more specific explanations to distinguish

³⁵⁰ Harry Guillod in Smith, ‘Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,’ 219.

them from, or relate them to British counterparts. On another occasion, for example, Guillod explained that the beans that had become a standard part of his diet en route to the Cariboo goldfields were a variation of those to which his family was accustomed. 'Miners' beans,' he wrote, 'are like our English horse beans, red and hard but not quite so big and want three or four hours boiling to make them eatable.'³⁵¹ Other letter-writers described pancakes as a particularly colonial dish that suited bachelor life in the backwoods, while explaining at length what they were like and how they were made.³⁵²

While dishes like bread, beans and pancakes were staple dishes in British Columbia, the colony's environment also provided local foodstuffs. Correspondents included thrilled descriptions of berry-gathering, with an emphasis on the country's abundance and availability of resources. To this end, Robert Burnaby declared to his mother and sisters:

I never saw such a country for berries... they are most delicious. There are four sorts ripe just now, by walking 100 yards, I could gather millions. The nicest are a pink, bright clear berry, something in shape like a bilberry, but larger and growing on a shrub something like a broom.³⁵³

Edward Verney similarly wrote to his father, 'the forest is as full of wild strawberries as possible, and it abounds with other fruit-bearing shrubs.'³⁵⁴ These wild berries seemed to invoke a sense of familiar wildness as home comforts in the backwoods. Indeed, as Burnaby found, British Columbia's familiar climate offered produce that could even surpass his memories of British food, including 'such fruit, pears and apples that Covent Garden never dreamt of, and peaches, tomatoes and grapes of splendid sorts.'³⁵⁵

³⁵¹ Harry Guillod in Smith, 'Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,' 208.

³⁵² For example, BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 2, Tommy Norbury to mother, Tobacco Plains, 6 December 1887; and Harry Guillod in Smith, 'Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,' 206. See also Roberts, *Western Avernus*, 116-17.

³⁵³ Robert Burnaby to mother and sisters, Burrards Inlet, 31 August 1859; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 112. These descriptions were generally of wild berries, but William Fraser Tolmie did introduce domesticated strawberries to Vancouver Island in 1857. S. F. Tomie, 'My Father: William Fraser Tolmie, 1812-1886,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 1, 4 (October 1937): 238.

³⁵⁴ Edmund Verney to father Harry Verney, Esquimalt, 25 May 1862; in Pritchard, *Vancouver Island Letters*, 63. See also CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, Victoria, 22 June 1862 and 25 June 1862.

³⁵⁵ Robert Burnaby to brother Tom Burnaby, San Francisco, 13 October 1859; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 116. Leonard Witherby similarly described the abundance and ready availability of cherries. BCA, E/C/W77, H. Leonard Witherby, Leonard Witherby to father, [?], 4 July 1899.

Settlers did not only explain the abundance and variety of local British Columbian foods in relation to Covent Garden and British norms. They also introduced a new colonial vocabulary of food into family letters. These words were often Chinook Jargon, a local language developed in the early nineteenth century to aid communication between Hudson's Bay Company fur traders and indigenous people across the Pacific Northwest. 'Muckamuck'—variously spelled, but meaning 'food'—was an especially common term. Not all correspondents provided a translation of such words. In so doing, they perhaps were attempting to give a local flavour to their correspondence, but in the process, they also marked themselves as operating in a different world from their relatives.³⁵⁶

British Columbians also used letters to describe the ways in which local work and market conditions changed their approach to food, especially in terms of meal content, size and structure. For one family of Shetlanders, it had been a luxury to eat meat once a week. Once they moved to Nanaimo, however, they found that they could afford to eat it twice a day.³⁵⁷ Men undertaking physical labour wrote to their families surprised letters about how much they could eat. Many of them had not undertaken much manual work in their former lives in Britain, so letters about their new appetites gestured toward some of the differences wrought in their lives due to the physicality of their everyday worlds in British Columbia.³⁵⁸ Descriptions of labour unrest also indicated the central importance of food in the everyday lives and concerns of workers. As Harold Nation explained, 'it is rot not having plenty of grub when you are working very hard... food is the first thing the men kick about.'³⁵⁹

³⁵⁶ For example, BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 3, Tommy Norbury to mother, Tobacco Plains, 26 November 1888. On another occasion, Norbury explained to his mother that 'bannicks' (bannock) was a kind of camp bread. BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 5, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, 18 September 1890. See also Robert Burnaby to sisters, Queenborough, 20 March 1859, to brother Tom, Queenborough, 24 April 1859, and to mother and sisters, Burrards Inlet, 11 August 1859; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 74, 80 and 108. In the first of these letters, Burnaby includes an explanation of muckamuck, describing it as an Indian word.

³⁵⁷ John Douglas Belshaw, 'The Standard of Living of British Miners on Vancouver Island, 1848-1900,' *BC Studies* 84 (Winter 1989-1990): 60.

³⁵⁸ For example, BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 2, Tommy Norbury to mother, Tobacco Plains, 6 December 1887; BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 3, Tommy Norbury to mother, Tobacco Plains, 16 August 1888; BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 4, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, 2 November 1889; and BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to mother, Moyie, 5 May 1901.

³⁵⁹ BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to mother, Moyie, 8 April. See also BCA, MS-1463, Alexander Charles Harris, reel A00674, diary, [n.p., n.d., entry regarding food in the logging camp]; BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 4, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, 2 November 1889; and BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to mother, Moyie, 29 November 1900.

The acquisition of food was one of the most anxious topics of correspondence for British Columbian settlers. In mid-Victorian Britain, food was increasingly processed, packaged and purchased rather than cultivated on a family scale. Growing markets moved foods around the country, and imported them from elsewhere using expanding transportation technologies such as steamships and railways. In contrast, British Columbian settlers found that their first step to eating was often hunting or gathering the food themselves according to seasonal rhythms.³⁶⁰ Susan Allison described the colony's Interior in terms of its range of summer foods to be hunted and gathered by settlers:

The Similkameen River and its tributaries gave us trout, Dolly Vardens and Greyling in abundance. We had heavy crops of Saskatoons, raspberries, strawberries, huckleberries, in their season. Wild roots and vegetables for those who knew enough to gather them, and for those that desired meat there was deer, bear, grouse, wild chicken and ptarmigan.³⁶¹

Allison's comment 'for those who knew enough to gather them' served as a reminder that acquiring food in rural British Columbia required new forms of specialist knowledge and skills that had to be gained from other settlers, indigenous people or personal trial and error.³⁶² Letter-writers especially emphasised that hunting was a life skill in British Columbia rather than purely a leisure activity or sport. It required practice, experience and knowledge. Survival itself often depended on one's success, though for settlers could not yet hunt effectively, or who lived in a more urban area like Victoria, indigenous people also sold some food items, especially venison.³⁶³

³⁶⁰ Even by the eighteenth century, Troy Bickham argues, almost every household in Britain bought some of their food. Bickham, 'Eating the Empire,' 73. The nineteenth-century growth of industrialisation and urbanisation, accompanied by the expansion of railways and other transport and communication systems, further increased many Britons' reliance on purchased goods. The freedom—indeed, the necessity—of hunting within the 'empty' or unregulated wild spaces of British Columbia would thus have been in sharp contrast to the lives of settlers' family members in Britain.

³⁶¹ Susan Allison in Margaret A. Ormsby, ed., *A Pioneer Gentlewoman in British Columbia: The Recollections of Susan Allison* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1976), 31. See also BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 5, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Fort Steele, 14 April 1890.

³⁶² For settlers who were willing to communicate with indigenous people, both food and knowledge about food were relatively accessible. Susan Allison in Ormsby, *A Pioneer Gentlewoman*, 39.

³⁶³ On survival and hunting, see Harry Guillod in Smith, 'Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,' 202; and BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 3, Tommy Norbury to mother, Valentine Ranche, 21 August 1888. On indigenous traders and venison, see CVA, PR-118, Charles Hayward, diary, Victoria, 24 July 1862; and BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to mother, Cranbrook, 23 September 1900. In Victoria, local food items like game, fish and berries were acquired from indigenous people at 'very reasonable rates.' James Bell to brother John Thomson, San Francisco, 27 February 1859; in Willard E. Ireland, ed., 'Gold-Rush Days in Victoria, 1858-1859,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 12, 3 (July 1948): 239.

Settlers also had some access to imported food, but for most of the century, this was along insecure, unreliable and seasonal transportation routes.³⁶⁴ By the mid-1860s, the Cariboo goldfields could be reached by supplies from California and Oregon, although only with great difficulty. One Welsh gold-miner, John Davies, explained to his wife and children how his food was imported: ‘the distance is so great and very difficult and every pound that comes here has to be packed in on the backs of mules for sixty miles which is the nearest point that can be reached by wagons.’³⁶⁵ These difficulties made food prices prohibitively high, not only in the goldfields but around British Columbia more generally. Edmund Verney complained to his father, ‘I find myself a far poorer man than I was in England: I even contemplate having to sell my horse, as the price of food is so high.’³⁶⁶ However, near the end of the century, Tommy Norbury claimed that ‘one *can* live so very cheaply here, although everything costs so much. There is no way of spending money except on grub, tobacco and clothing. The only “pleasure” money one spends is on hunting and fishing materials which come to much the same as grub.’³⁶⁷ He estimated that he could live on a Kootenay ranch by himself for about \$150 per year, which would not include alcohol or ‘luxuries such as beef in summer or tinned meats or fruits.’ This budget, he emphasised, would also rely heavily on ‘shooting and fishing.’³⁶⁸

In an attempt to counter the difficulties, vagaries and costs of acquiring imported goods, many men—especially prospectors—carried as much food as they could with them. William Jones described leaving Yale with his friends, ‘each of us with his swag on his back.’ The men had few belongings other than food, he wrote; ‘what we have mostly now is some flour, rice, tea, biscuits and bacon.’³⁶⁹ En route to

³⁶⁴ The Allisons were able to send pack trains over the Hope Mountains during the summers. Susan Allison in Ormsby, *A Pioneer Gentlewoman*, 31.

³⁶⁵ John Davies to wife and children, Williams Creek, 17 July 1864; published in *Y Gwladgarwr*, 5 November 1864; republished in Conway, ‘Welsh Gold-Miners in British Columbia,’ 71. See also Thomas Gwallter Price (‘Cuhelyn’) to L1----, 20 March 1862; published in the *Merthyr Telegraph*, 31 May 1862; republished in Conway, ‘Welsh Gold-Miners in British Columbia,’ 55.

³⁶⁶ Edmund Verney to father Harry Verney, Esquimalt, 17 July 1862; in Pritchard, *Vancouver Island Letters*, 73-74.

³⁶⁷ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 4, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Tobacco Plains, 6 March 1889.

³⁶⁸ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 2, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Tobacco Plains, 13 November 1887.

³⁶⁹ William Jones, Lytton, 22 June 1862; published in *Y Gwladgarwr*, 20 September 1862; republished in Conway, ‘Welsh Gold-Miners in British Columbia,’ 58. Several other letters mentioned rice, clearly a common imported staple by the late nineteenth century. See, for example BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 3, Tommy Norbury to brother Coni Norbury, Tobacco Plains, 24 September 1888;

the Klondike goldfields near the end of the nineteenth century, English physician Roger Hicks arrived in Glenora packing ‘60 lbs of bacon on my shoulder.’ Along with his partner, Hicks also transported ‘some half dozen sacks of flour, bacon, etc,’ as well as their other baggage.³⁷⁰

Whether they packed the food themselves or acquired it later, colonial and regional isolation from imported goods meant that many Britons had to eat a monotonous diet of whatever was available and cheap. For poor prospectors in the mid-century, this was often, as Harry Guillod described it, ‘Beans and Bacon! Bacon and Beans!’³⁷¹ Many of these men encountered a ‘want of provisions,’ whether regularly or occasionally.³⁷² This was an experience that middle-class British immigrants found unfamiliar and deeply unsettling. When he ran low on food near Cowichan Lake, for example, English student Alexander Harris considered himself ‘altogether too far from the “cheerful haunts of men” for this situation to be pleasant.’³⁷³ Settled on his own ranch, Norbury was more equipped to deal with occasional and seasonal problems with food supplies, but he still often wrote to his family about the hardships experienced due to irregular imported goods and seasonal local foods. In April 1890 he explained, ‘this is the hardest time of year to keep the larder supplied.’ He had run out of sugar, while local foods were also difficult to acquire: ‘game is out of season,’ ‘beef won’t keep,’ and the ‘few good duck around’ were ‘here today & California tomorrow.’ Instead, he ‘live[d] principally on trout which sounds luxurious but one can get “sated” on them sooner than anything.’³⁷⁴

Imported staples like flour, sugar and salt were usually the first to run out, leading to desolate meals and desperate cooking creativity.³⁷⁵ As Harry Guillod reported, when his money and baking powder ran out along the Cariboo road, he resorted to eating ‘flour and water cakes.’³⁷⁶ In response to such news, family

and BCA, MS-2167, T. Roger C. Hicks, Roger Hicks to daughters Flo, Pansie and Josie, Stikine River, 3 April 1898.

³⁷⁰ BCA, MS-2167, T. Roger C. Hicks, Roger Hicks to daughters, Cañon Stikine River, 18 May 1898.

³⁷¹ Harry Guillod in Smith, ‘Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,’ 208-9. See also Roberts, *Western Avernus*, 126-27; and the letter from Charles Major, Fort Hope, 20 September 1859, published in the *Daily Globe*, 2 January 1860, and republished in Robie L. Reid and W. Kaye Lamb, eds., ‘Two Narratives of the Fraser River Gold-Rush,’ *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 5, 3 (July 1941): 230.

³⁷² CVA, PR-118, Charles Hayward, diary, Victoria, 27 May 1862.

³⁷³ BCA, MS-1463, Alexander Charles Harris, reel A00674, diary, [near Cowichan Lake], [n.d.].

³⁷⁴ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 5, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Fort Steele, 14 April 1890.

³⁷⁵ Susan Allison in Ormsby, *A Pioneer Gentlewoman*, 31.

³⁷⁶ Harry Guillod in Smith, ‘Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,’ 224. See also Susan Allison in Ormsby, *A Pioneer Gentlewoman*, 62.

members in Britain worried about the health of those in British Columbia. Tommy Norbury responded to one such letter by explaining the rhythms of daily meals in relation to the practicalities of the day for a British Columbian labourer:

You seem very afraid I don't get enough to eat. I get enough but I won't say that I couldn't do with some more. We have two meals a day at 8:00 and 5:00, and in the summer sometimes a bit of bread and a cup of tea in the middle of the day. The days are so short now that the cook would be cooking all day if you had a mid day meal.³⁷⁷

Settlers also replied with particular reference to their weight. Mary Moody reported that she and her children had gained weight in what she saw as a healthy climate, but most men reported losing weight.³⁷⁸ Weight loss was framed as related to shortages of food and the difficulties of manual labour, with letter-writers describing their bodies as imprinted physically with the impact of British Columbian lives. Norbury wrote many such letters, in one instance telling his parents he had lost fifteen pounds, adding '13 st. 3 lbs. is now what I carry.'³⁷⁹ In another case, he explained, 'We killed a yearling steer about 3 wks. ago so have lived well lately but my belt has decreased 3 holes since arriving at Kootenay. At this rate my waist will be reduced to a minimum in about a year. 31 1/2 at present.'³⁸⁰

Although Norbury complained about weight loss and food shortages, by the end of the nineteenth century settlers generally had better access to imported foods from other places in British Columbia, as well as from Britain, Canada, the United States and elsewhere. By the turn of the century, Harold Nation could write to his sister in England about a mining-camp lunch that contained:

Bean soup, Soda biscuits, Boiled dried Cod fish, cream sauce, Roast ribs of beef with roast potatoes, Boiled potatoes, Bread pudding, Vanilla sauce, and two pieces of apricot pie, Tea. How's that for a light lunch? All down in 20 minutes. It is our principal meal.³⁸¹

In this passage, Nation used food to explain to his parents the physical demands of manual labour in the backwoods, as well as the rhythms of time and work that

³⁷⁷ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 2, Tommy Norbury to mother, Tobacco Plains, 6 December 1887.

³⁷⁸ BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to sister Emily, Victoria, 2 February [n.y.].

³⁷⁹ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 5, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, 15 June 1890.

³⁸⁰ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 2, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Tobacco Plains, 13 November 1887. See also BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 3, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Columbia Lakes, 2 August 1888; and BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 6, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, 20 August 1891.

³⁸¹ BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to sister, Moyie, [n.d., spring 1901].

constituted his everyday life. At the same time, his description of the meal's content revealed a hybrid food culture in turn-of-the-century British Columbia. It included many typically British dishes (for example, the beef, potatoes and tea) and a progression of courses standard for middle-class Victorian meals, but it also contained dishes grounded in the practicalities and resources of the backwoods (for example, bean soup and dried cod). The passage also indirectly informs about local transportation, technology and markets, as Nation's camp probably imported the fish, already dried, from the east coast and sourced the beef and apricots from the Okanagan region of British Columbia, if not from further afield. Unlike dishes described in mid-nineteenth-century letters, it appears that nothing in this meal was grown, hunted or procured by the men themselves.

Other menus from the late nineteenth century indicate that individuals, families and public eating establishments had developed a food culture dependent on a mixture of local and imported foods, and 'home' and other dishes. A Sunday 1896 menu from Nanaimo's Central Hotel, popular with local coal miners, included traditional British dishes like sirloin of beef with Yorkshire pudding and plum pudding. There were many items that were probably procured locally, including stuffed salmon, oyster patties and venison. Ingredients for chicken giblet pie, baked ham, pork chops and roast chicken, as well as vegetables like potatoes, tomatoes, celery and green peas, may also have been raised locally by the late nineteenth century. However, the presence of menu items like lemon pie and lobster indicates that food could be imported at relatively reasonable prices and from a range of places by the end of the century.³⁸²

In this context, settlers discussed British dishes with mixed emotions. Many described themselves as attempting to recreate home food as closely as possible, using either imported goods or familiar local products. In so doing, they positioned these dishes as symbols of home in an unfamiliar place, and potential points of connection with distant relatives. However, at the same time, they found that even these foods took on new meanings in British Columbia. On a trip from the coast to the Skeena region in 1880, for example, Helen Kate Woods felt that tea meant something very different for those 'roughing it' in the backwoods:

³⁸² Belshaw, 'The Standard of Living,' 59. For another example of 'English' style dishes that may or may not have been served in British Columbia, see BCA, MS-2894, O'Reilly family, box 23, file 21, reel A01923, Caroline O'Reilly's recipes.

Having had no food since leaving Kincolith our first care is to make tea.—Tea,—after a hard day’s travel unless you have gone through some similar experience,—you don’t know what TEA is. TEA—hot from a billy-cock and sipped from tin mugs—it is LIFE, strength, rest, refreshment—all in one—This was our first night of ‘roughing it’.³⁸³

Other letters reminded family members of the sometimes stark differences between colonial and metropolitan dining etiquette. In one case, Norbury thanked his mother for sending him a set of cutlery, although he felt uncomfortable using it as it ‘looked altogether beyond the likes of the country.’³⁸⁴ Men especially wrote about their shock at emerging to eat in ‘civilised’ urban settings with the political and social elite or with new arrivals from Britain who still maintained more formal dining etiquette. Harold Nation wrote an excited but disconcerted letter to his mother and sister describing his time with two new friends from a town near to his mining camp:

After the game we went up to Green’s house and office where Beale has a room and had a talk with him. How nice it is to meet a couple of gentlemen again. I had held aloof from them before as I feel so uncouth and dirty when I have my working clothes on so I enjoyed the afternoon all the more. I spoke of wanting to put my mandolin somewhere so they said to take it there. I went and got it and my music and as Beale brought out a banjo, we had half an hour playing before going to the Kootenay Hotel for dinner on Green’s invitation. My! it was awfully slow, just fancy having to wait between the courses to have the plates changed! After the scramble and gobble at the camp table it seemed interminable—limpid sweetness very much drawn out!³⁸⁵

Nation was not alone in his complex reaction to reminders of what formal, middle-class British dining could be like. While several members of the colonial elite delighted in starting ‘social civilization’ in New Westminster by demanding that guests at Government House dinners wear evening dress, Judge Matthew Baillie Begbie—whose former life as a London lawyer had turned to ‘an almost savage life’ in British Columbia—found this to be a ‘terrible blow.’³⁸⁶ Similarly, Tommy Norbury complained about attending a dinner at Government House during a visit to Victoria, reporting to his mother, ‘what very painful functions swell dinners are! I

³⁸³ BCA, MS-0773, Helen Kate Woods, diary, [n.p.], 3 April 1880.

³⁸⁴ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 3, Tommy Norbury to mother, Valentine Rancho, 21 August 1888.

³⁸⁵ BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to mother and sister, Moyie, 17 April 1901.

³⁸⁶ BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, box 2, file 2, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch, *Victorian Odyssey* (reminiscences), chapter 4.

hope I shan't be called upon to attend another.³⁸⁷ Meanwhile, when Harold Nation visited a friend, McVittie, after living in a tent in 'more or less dirty surroundings,' he again struggled with the dinner and its trappings: 'My, how awkward I felt in manipulating the dainty silver and china and my poor hands looked terrible against the tablecloth, being ingrained with pitch in every cracked place.'³⁸⁸ Letters such as these used dining etiquette as a way of explaining the uncomfortable sense of difference and change that crystallised as settlers struggled to return to their roots as certain kinds of diners.

At the same time, 'swell dinners' also served to identify the upper classes of Victoria and New Westminster as both colonial elites and British expatriates, distinguishing them from the working and transient classes in the cities as well as from Americans and Canadians, whom many saw as inferior. Letters from these individuals emphasised to metropolitan relatives that colonial events were similar to their British counterparts, with meals representing civilisation in a context in which this seemed challenged. One such event, the 1862 wedding between Arthur Bushby and Agnes Douglas, was a major social occasion for Victoria's elite. Writing to his mother about the wedding's 'splendid breakfast,' Robert Burnaby reported, 'you would be astonished indeed to see how well they do those things in these wild parts, as good and as ornamental as you could see it done in London.'³⁸⁹ Likewise, Mary Moody described in detail a meal that she had served on one of Begbie's visits to New Westminster, which included 'Carrot Soup—Fish Cakes—Leg Mutton, Beef steak Pie, Curry & Cutlets—Ducks—Maccaroni & Cheese—Pudding & Trifle ie—Apples—& Biscuits—Ale—Porter, Sherry & Port (fr Edinburgh).' Moody assured her mother, 'I really must tell you what a very good one we had, in order that you may see that in "roughing it in the bush" is not such very hard work.' After eight weeks in the backwoods, she claimed, Begbie did 'ample justice to a civilized repast.'³⁹⁰

³⁸⁷ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 12, Tommy Norbury to mother, Victoria, 19 October 1897. Others were more ambivalent. Alexander Harris, who was only visiting British Columbia for a short time, was pleased that he 'lived luxuriantly' during the period that he stayed with one friend, 'even once [having] a table cloth & saucers, though they were for fruit.' BCA, MS-1463, Alexander Charles Harris, reel A00674, diary, Saltspring Island, [n.d.].

³⁸⁸ BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to mother, [n.p.], 31 December 1901.

³⁸⁹ Robert Burnaby to mother Sarah Burnaby, Victoria, 22 May 1862; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 169. For context, see Valerie Green, *Above Stairs: Social Life in Upper-Class Victoria, 1843-1918* (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1994).

³⁹⁰ BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, New Westminster, 2 November [n.y.].

Ultimately, whether they complained about the expectations of formal dining or whether they delighted in a ‘civilized repast,’ settlers found that they could not recreate the larger familial context that lay behind familiar dishes and traditions, and expressions of homesickness frequently revolved around family food traditions. Harry Guillod wrote to his mother, ‘I often picture to myself what you are all doing at home; and many a time when I have been cold, hungry, wet and tired, my thoughts have centred on a quiet cup of tea at Paddington.’³⁹¹ Likewise, Charles Hayward linked food, family and place in an Easter 1862 entry in his diary, later sent to his family. On this day, he was on a ship to Victoria, having left his wife and parents in Stratford. He filtered the emotional impact of the separation through the language of food:

Easter Sunday. I thought of home many times today and picture to myself home and you all looking at the large map wondering where about I am on the mighty deep. I thought too of your lamb and green peas as contrasted with our salt horse and biscuit.³⁹²

Here, food worked as a tangible and meaningful symbol for emotions that may have been otherwise difficult for Hayward to articulate. Easter dinner was a subject that could be understood by both writer and reader, containing deeper associations with family and home that underlay his desire for lamb and green peas. In the process, it served as a reminder of the familiar dishes and family context that would be absent from his new British Columbian life.

Bush cookery and the family: gender, place and changing relationships

The dominance of gold-rushes and resource industries ensured that most British immigrants to late-nineteenth-century British Columbia were men, despite schemes aimed at bringing more white women to the region. In the context of this gender imbalance, and given the lack of servants for most settlers, British men were expected to cook for themselves, a task which hitherto had been assigned to their female relatives, servants or public eating establishments. In their family letters, men explained their experiences with and reactions to this new task, in the process seeking to justify its necessity in relation to the specific context of British Columbia. At the same time, they situated cooking within ongoing conversations about their

³⁹¹ Harry Guillod in Smith, ‘Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,’ 196.

³⁹² CVA, PR-118, Charles Hayward, diary, [Pacific Ocean], 20 April 1862.

knowledge, duties and roles within the family. In so doing, 'bush cookery' offered an explanation of the British Columbian everyday in explicit or implicit comparison to British norms, while also enabling letter-writers to navigate changing family relationships that resulted from, and were symbolised by, the acquisition of men's cooking skills in this place.

The frequency of male cooking, particularly under backwoods conditions, was one of the strongest points of contrast between everyday life in Britain and British Columbia. Although men were known to make food in Britain in certain contexts, the daily work of domestic cooking was closely associated with women, whether relatives or servants.³⁹³ Even middle- and upper-class women who did not do the actual work of cooking were expected to have the knowledge required to run a kitchen, and were taught related skills from a young age.

This correlation between women and cooking began to break down even before British settlers arrived in British Columbia, as many male immigrants first started to cook for themselves after encountering the poor quality and quantity of ship food, especially for steerage passengers.³⁹⁴ Once in British Columbia, cooking roles were assigned in a range of ways depending on income and class, region, occupation and social context. Men living in British Columbia's urban areas sometimes cooked for themselves, but they tended to frequent hotels, boarding houses and friends' homes if possible. Many resource camps designated individual cooks to feed the group, while homosocial backwoods partnerships—for example, men running ranches together or partnering on gold mines—also sometimes depended on certain members to do the cooking while the rest took on other domestic chores. Several individuals started roadhouses along routes to the goldfields, and cooked for those passing through the area. Morley Roberts indicated that this kind of 'restaurant' eating in rural British Columbia could look very different to that of urban Victorian Britain, where the still-rare but emerging public establishments were tied to French-influenced formal dining:

³⁹³ Professional chefs were typically men, for example, while Cornish pasties were classically the purview of miners.

³⁹⁴ For example, BCA, MS-1236, Lomas family, William Henry Lomas, diary, [aboard the *Silistria*], 18 August 1862; and CVA, PR-63, W. Wilson, file 19, description of William Wilson's ship voyage by Milly Church. Edward Robinson had a female neighbour on board cook for him. BCA, MS-0083, Edward W. Robinson, diary, [aboard the *Silistria*], 26 July 1862. For those travelling saloon-class in the later nineteenth century, the food could be quite extravagant. See BCA, MS-2044, Deaville family, box 1, file 1, menus from 5-7 May 1898 aboard the *Parisian*.

Under a tree was a rude table, made of a slab of split pine, on stakes driven into the ground. There was a log-bench permanently fixed, so that one could sit down. Under another tree was a smouldering fire with a camp oven or skillet, a kettle, and some dirty pans lying in the mud and ashes. Near at hand was a small tent with blankets and a small pile of provisions, flour and biscuit, with some bacon lying on the flour sack. On a big tree close to the trail was this notice:—‘ILLECILLIWET’ RESTAURANT. *Meals at all hours...* [The meal consisted of] some bacon, boiled... villainous coffee, and... a mass of greasy-looking beans.³⁹⁵

While enterprising—if not necessarily skilled—men started such restaurants or cooked for groups, others declined to cook for anyone if they could find someone else to do it for them. In some cases, their households included women (indigenous or non-indigenous) living as wives or partners, who took on cooking responsibilities.³⁹⁶ Those who could afford it hired cooks, either on a daily basis or for special events. These were often Chinese men.³⁹⁷ Indigenous women sometimes worked as servants too, while British female servants were rare in the backwoods and their turnover rate in urban settlements was very high.³⁹⁸ Overall, despite these options, many men, especially in rural areas, took responsibility for their own food, either cooking for themselves or as a shared activity within groups of men.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁵ Roberts, *Western Avernus*, 120-21. It is interesting that these men used the term ‘restaurant’ at all—a term that was still largely associated with the nascent exclusive eating establishments of Paris. Rebecca L. Spang, *The Invention of the Restaurant: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000). Indeed, mid-Victorian London apparently did not even have establishments labelled restaurants in the middle of the century, rather containing hotels, private clubs and chophouses. Rebecca L. Spang, ‘All the World’s a Restaurant: On the Global Gastronomics of Tourism and Travel,’ in Grew, *Food in Global History*, 81. For more on the English context, see John Burnett, *England Eats Out: A Social History of Eating Out in England from 1830 to the Present* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2004); and for a broader exploration of eating in public spaces, see Marc Jacobs and Peter Scholliers, eds., *Eating Out in Europe: Picnics, Gourmet Dining and Snacks since the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

³⁹⁶ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 2, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Tobacco Plains, 13 November 1887.

³⁹⁷ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 12, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, Boxing Night 1897. This does not appear to have impacted what foods British settlers ate, as their letters suggest little exposure to Chinese dishes; rather, Chinese cooks appear to have learned to make meals familiar to their employers. The Moody family did not hire a Chinese cook as their help included a sapper from the Royal Engineers. BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, New Westminster, 7 November [n.y.].

³⁹⁸ BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, New Westminster, 7 November [n.y.], 16 April [n.y.], 28 June 1860, 24 November 1862, and 26 February [n.y.]. Also BCA, MS-0142, John Christie, diary, beginning with Victoria, 6 November 1859, for his wife’s movements as a cook. The Moodys were one of the only households covered by my research that hired British women as servants. However, the turnover was high, and Moody’s letters are filled with complaints about the women. BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, New Westminster, 12 March [n.y.] and 16 April [n.y.].

³⁹⁹ BCA, MS-2167, T. Roger C. Hicks, Roger Hicks to daughter Josie, Glenora, 12 June 1898.

Although colonial cooking could be done by men or women of all ethnic groups, British male letter-writers consistently framed ‘bush cookery’ as a key aspect of their everyday lives in British Columbia. By explaining to their families what, how and why they were cooking, these men used the topic to describe the wider context of British Columbian life, particularly the gender imbalance among settlers, the transient nature of the workforce, and its difficult environment. Morgan Lewis, for example, wrote to his family in 1862, telling them, ‘I am almost ashamed to tell you of our way of living... I am one of four living in a plank house without one woman.’⁴⁰⁰ Because of these unfamiliar and, according to Lewis, uncomfortable and unpleasant conditions, the four men shared domestic tasks that would have typically been assigned to women, with one doing dishes and cleaning, another sewing, a third baking bread, and the last washing clothing.

Other men expressed less shame, but just explained at length about their techniques, skills, recipes, food inventories, failures and successes. In the process, they could justify and explain men’s cooking by emphasising that its results were not so far distant or different from what was familiar, common and acceptable to family at home. Robert Burnaby took care to underscore the quality of food that could be produced by men in British Columbia, especially in urban areas. Describing one Masonic dinner, he stressed that their ‘chef’ was ‘once upon a time cook to Louis Napoleon and is a great artiste.’⁴⁰¹ Indeed, he suggested, ‘it would astonish you who fancy us poor fellows living in the wilds of the far-west to see the splendid turn out.’ Burnaby also described his ‘Bachelor Hall on the sea shore,’ where he lived with a man named Balasam who was a ‘miracle in the cooking line.’ He even suggested that his food was on par with, or better than what his family ate.⁴⁰² Through such descriptions, Burnaby sought to reassure his family about the quality, nature and familiarity of his colonial life, providing them—and himself—with points by which to measure, compare and understand his experiences in British Columbia.

⁴⁰⁰ Morgan Lewis to Rev. D. R. Lewis, New Westminster, 29 October 1862; published in *Seren Cymru* (Star of Wales), 23 January 1863; republished in Conway, ‘Welsh Gold-Miners in British Columbia,’ 65. William Jones, likewise, reported on 22 June 1862 from Lytton, ‘By now we have learned to live without the support of a woman.’ Published in *Y Gwladgarwr*, 20 September 1862; republished in Conway, ‘Welsh Gold-Miners in British Columbia,’ 68.

⁴⁰¹ French terms and French cooking were connected with a particularly high class of food practice in the context of Victorian Britain. Broomfield, *Food and Cooking in Victorian England*, 100-121.

⁴⁰² Robert Burnaby to sister Harriet, Victoria, 26 January 1861; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 158.

While some underscored this sense of similarity or even superiority, most letter-writers framed bachelor cooking as foreign, context-specific and requiring explanation for metropolitan relatives.⁴⁰³ Alexander Harris described bachelor cooking as a body of knowledge and skills that cast off the expectations of metropolitan cooking. After experiencing what he called ‘a slight taste... of “batching”’ on Harry Cargill’s ranch on Saltspring Island, he concluded:

The one great culinary instrument of the batchelor out West is the frying pan; in fact there is one grand recipe for cooking everything, viz. put it on the fryingpan & something will come off. Moreover since the washing up is at best unpleasant, the number of plates is reduced to a minimum of one, though if you are particular & accustomed to the absurd etiquette of civilization, you can turn it over & use the other side, when the meat is finished. Another thing that I observed about washing up is, that it is always done before instead of after a meal, & also that dogs are very useful assistants.⁴⁰⁴

Men asked distant relatives to visualise the tangible parts of everyday cooking that differed dramatically from metropolitan kitchens. Harry Guillod told his mother, ‘Imagine cooking fritters and having to hold a handkerchief over the pan to keep the hail out,’ while Tommy Norbury described a blizzard by telling his parents it was simply too cold to cook anything.⁴⁰⁵ In such difficult cooking contexts, they emphasised the value of creativity and flexibility as a matter of survival, especially in the face of regular food shortages. In one instance, Guillod’s partner ‘Old Mac’ cooked an unusual meal in terms of content, but one that was admired in the sense that it necessarily took advantage of available resources:

Mac went to the stream with a big hook temporarily fixed to the end of a stick, and succeeded in a few minutes in spearing two small fish: these were forthwith consigned to a wonderful ‘billy’ containing baconfat and the remains of a grouse; this was put on the fire with water and flour stirred in making ‘mush’ which with the addition of a little sugar formed the old chap’s decidedly original dinner; I might say, sumptuous, as there was fish, flesh, fowl and pudding; and when once in the stomach they were I presume quite as beneficial to the general health as if put in separately; though the

⁴⁰³ When British women encountered men’s kitchens in the backwoods, they were sometimes disoriented by the differences. See Julia Bullock-Webster’s diary entry from her first morning in her sons’ kitchen in Keremeos. She describes ‘feeling very strange not knowing how to manage the stove, or cook, or find what was necessary. We were exhausted to understand it all by intuition!’ BCA, MS-1965, Julia Rachel Stevens Price Bullock-Webster, reel A01391, diary, Keremeos, 27 August 1894.

⁴⁰⁴ BCA, MS-1463, Alexander Charles Harris, reel A00674, diary, Saltspring Island, [n.d.].

⁴⁰⁵ Harry Guillod in Smith, ‘Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,’ 210; and BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 5, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, 18 September 1890.

getting them in would have been a trial to some palates however hungry.⁴⁰⁶

Such passages highlighted the disjunctures between the culinary worlds of a British Columbian 'bush cook' and a metropolitan cook working under 'civilised' conditions, with the former framed as part of a new backwoods masculinity rather than as a poor translation of women's work in a new context.

Indeed, cooking skills could be a matter of pride and independence for men as they wrote about how they learned to use local resources, expand their repertoires, and cook under all conditions that they encountered. In one of his earliest letters from British Columbia, Norbury wrote with some pride about his quick learning, and already strained for a little freedom to experiment with his new skills: 'I got on with the cooking part all right and made some very good dishes. I made some good hashes but had not much to experiment on.'⁴⁰⁷ William Lomas was even more excited about his newfound talent: 'I am quite proud... We now make our own yeast bread, puddings etc... It is wonderful how we can do without the assistance of the ladies!! Don't be offended anyone.'⁴⁰⁸

Other men never became proficient at cooking. In a letter to his daughter Josie, Roger Hicks criticised a campmate who was 'raging around' as he attempted to cook a dinner for eight. He continued, 'de Mattos may be a learned geologist, but he is no cook! Bread or puddings are quite beyond him & a pot of porridge is as much as he can rise to unless he has twelve hours preparation.' Nonetheless, despite his complaints, Hicks still expected de Mattos to do his share of the cooking tasks in camp. As he explained to his daughter, 'We each take two days cooking at a time, so that we all have a share.'⁴⁰⁹ Tommy Norbury's brother, Billy, was not necessarily a bad cook, but he was an insecure and unwilling one. When Tommy left him on the ranch by himself, he worried to his other brother, Coni: 'I don't know how he'll get on, but he knows *how* to do all the cooking, but won't try it when I'm there, as he knows he has only got to do it badly & I shall have to do it.'⁴¹⁰ When these failed

⁴⁰⁶ Harry Guillod in Smith, 'Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,' 221. See also Roberts, *Western Avernus*, 108-9.

⁴⁰⁷ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 2, Tommy Norbury to mother, Tobacco Plains, 6 December 1887.

⁴⁰⁸ BCA, MS-1236, Lomas family, William Henry Lomas, diary, [aboard the *Silistria*], 24 August 1862. See also Harry Guillod in Smith, 'Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,' 206.

⁴⁰⁹ BCA, MS-2167, T. Roger C. Hicks, Roger Hicks to daughter Josie, Glenora, 12 June 1898.

⁴¹⁰ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 3, Tommy Norbury to brother Coni Norbury, Tobacco Plains, 24 September 1888.

cooks wrote their own letters, they framed cooking as a chore and emphasised that it was a skill that they were unwilling or unable to learn.⁴¹¹ In one case, David Pringle complained to his father about the ‘annoyances of fires & cookery & washing up,’ and even exclaimed, ‘What a blessing it w[oul]d be to live on air.’⁴¹²

Despite such reluctance, most men had to develop at least some cooking skills, whether this involved baking sourdough bread over a campfire or making preserves of the colony’s abundant fruit and berries.⁴¹³ Although they did not always include such information in their letters, they appear to have acquired many of their cooking skills from encounters with other men in the backwoods, making bush cookery a locally produced and situated body of knowledge. In his travel narrative, *Western Avernus*, Morley Roberts recounted one tale of cooking knowledge shared between an experienced and an amateur backwoods cook. During his travels on the Fraser River, he was served a ‘very suspicious-looking’ pie by a priest named Edwards. Upon eating it, he found the pie ‘like a board, solid, unbendable, durable, and waterproof.’ Admitting that he was the cook, Edwards told him that he had only used flour and water, without grease or baking soda, adding:

I never made one before in my life, and the paste seems so hard, and unlike pies that other people make... I never thought it was so hard to cook. There’s some flour and water mixed up now in the kitchen, and it won’t stick together, but lies in flakes, however much I knead it.

To this, Roberts advised him to try more water.⁴¹⁴ Another commentator reported on an ‘animated discussion on bush cookery’ where ‘a number of valuable hints were thrown out’ by residents of the Goldstream region.⁴¹⁵

Such exchanges were not wholly confined to discussions between men. There were comparatively few white women outside of British Columbia’s main settlements, but they too had to develop new cooking skills. Some had arrived without much experience directing their own kitchens, while others lacked cooking knowledge appropriate to the backwoods. Upon their arrival in the colony in the 1860s, Susan Allison and her mother found that they did not know how to bake

⁴¹¹ John Davies, 21 May 1866; published in *Y Gwladgarwr*, 28 July 1866; republished in Conway, ‘Welsh Gold-Miners in British Columbia,’ 72. See also Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 25.

⁴¹² BCA, MS-0369, Alexander Pringle, A. D. Pringle to father, Hope, 7 April 1860.

⁴¹³ Robert Burnaby to mother and sisters, Burrards Inlet, 31 August 1859; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 112; and Edmund Verney to father Harry Verney, Esquimalt, 25 May 1862; in Pritchard, *Vancouver Island Letters*, 63.

⁴¹⁴ Roberts, *Western Avernus*, 162.

⁴¹⁵ Mirabile Dictu, ‘Bush Life,’ *British Colonist*, 27 March 1865; in Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 25.

bread there. They learned from the directions on the side of a can of 'Preston and Merrill Yeast Powder,' and from the instructions of 'a man named Kilburn' who taught them how 'to use sourdough and bake [it] in a skillet.'⁴¹⁶

The development of local, specialist knowledge could unsettle configurations of expertise in the family, as the predominately male cooking world of British Columbia became dislocated from traditions and forms of shared knowledge among British women. At the same time, shared information and skills helped to build networks of community and pseudo-family in British Columbia, as settlers took care of one another.⁴¹⁷ In *On the Edge of Empire*, Adele Perry briefly examines male cooking in colonial British Columbia, making a similar argument that it developed in the absence of white women and as part of a local white male homosocial culture.⁴¹⁸ However, this divergence between family and bush cookery was never a complete process, and the family never became irrelevant or obsolete in British Columbian kitchens. Men did learn to cook in and because of white homosocial spaces, but they still explained bush cookery through the changing meanings of family within the context of nineteenth-century British Columbia; indeed, a significant part of coming to terms with colonial life was navigating relationships between backwoods bachelordom and distant family. As cooking became a new site of shared, if sometimes contested, expert knowledge within the family and a marker of new relationships between men and women, British Columbian settlers continued to live with the expectations, values and presence of remembered, imagined and distant family.

On a basic level, correspondence enabled separated relatives to maintain a conversation about the process of cooking in British Columbia. Tommy Norbury's mother, for example, asked for more details about a dish that he had mentioned cooking. He responded to her in a letter to his brother, writing, 'Prairie chickens are generally cut in pieces fried with an onion, or else boiled & making a soup with

⁴¹⁶ Susan Allison in Ormsby, *A Pioneer Gentlewoman*, 9.

⁴¹⁷ Charles Hayward befriended the man living with him, a 'very good cook,' who offered to make his dinner so that he could attend both Sunday school and church one Sunday. CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, Victoria, 15 June 1862. Tommy Norbury was also thankful for local networks through which food was shared. When he was ill on one occasion, he received eggs, caribou and birds from his neighbours. BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 5, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, 7 May 1890.

⁴¹⁸ Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 25-26.

potatoes & rice.’⁴¹⁹ Such letters became routes by which separated families shared information, and by extension partially shared encounters with the everyday in British Columbia. At the same time, discussions of food preparation became a potential point of connection between women in Britain and their brothers or sons in British Columbia, despite differences between metropolitan and colonial cooking. Expertise travelled in both directions, as men in British Columbia both asked for advice and recipes, and offered the same to their relatives.

Men eagerly sought to share cooking tips with female relatives in Britain, particularly in relation to skills specific to backwoods British Columbia. Some even offered to teach their mothers and sisters on their reunion. William Lomas wrote to his family in triumph: ‘I should like some of you to see me mixing the bread. You would be able to take lessons!’⁴²⁰ Harry Guillod saw the pancake as a particularly colonial way of life that he had perfected, writing to his mother, ‘George and I have turned into professed cooks... and beat J----- hollow (so we think) throwing a fritter or “slap-jack” in first-rate style; we’ll show you how to cook pancakes when we come back.’⁴²¹ When he finally discovered a way to bake baking-powder bread, Guillod wrote a detailed description of the proper technique:

It must be mixed quickly and baked before a brisk fire. You make the dough into a flat cake fitting into the frying pan and putting it on the fire, heat it enough to stand up, when you take it out, by the aid of a forked bit of stick before the fire first scoring the top of the cake with a knife which helps it to bake quickly; then [if] not done sufficient underneath it may be turned; you may bake a number of cakes by taking them out of the pan as soon as they will stand and propping them up all round.⁴²²

Harold Nation even sent his sister his recipe for Boston brown bread.⁴²³ Such discussions marked the shifting dynamics of family relationships, as traditionally feminine and masculine roles were reworked according not only to the distances between members, but also to their changing activities, skills, knowledge and roles in specific places.

While they offered detailed explanations of the cooking techniques that they had mastered, British Columbians also reached out for help and advice in discussions

⁴¹⁹ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 3, Tommy Norbury to brother Coni Norbury, Tobacco Plains, 24 September 1888.

⁴²⁰ BCA, MS-1236, Lomas family, William Henry Lomas, diary, [aboard the *Silistria*], 18 August 1862.

⁴²¹ Harry Guillod in Smith, ‘Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,’ 206.

⁴²² Harry Guillod in Smith, ‘Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,’ 206.

⁴²³ BCA, MS-1151, Nation family, Harold Nation to sister, Moyie, 24 March 1901.

of culinary failures. Guillod described some ill-cooked beans that had resulted in diarrheal attacks on the Cariboo trail, while Norbury reported to his mother in one case, 'I made up my mind I would eat whatever I cooked, but I was extremely sorry I had made that resolve on my first attempt at baking, good old shoe leather couldn't have been tougher but I eat it by degrees.'⁴²⁴ In order to help with aspects of his cooking which needed development, Norbury requested recipes from his family.⁴²⁵ Recipe exchanges in both directions offered the possibility of a poignant point of connection as relatives could then cook and consume the same dishes as one another. However, at the same time, these dishes may not have been ever made in the other site; different ingredients, social contexts and practical arrangements would have discouraged metropolitan relatives from baking bread over an open campfire, for example. Although little evidence remains as to how families used the recipes, I suggest that this was still a meaningful exchange as British recipes could symbolise a consumable sense of home, familiarity and identity, and as British Columbian recipes revealed details of everyday colonial life in an accessible and familiar form. Their exchange acted as a tangible marker of men's cooking abilities and interests, too, as family communications and relationships were reshaped by association with the British Columbian context.

'Just like the Xmas dinner of old home': Christmas dinner and distant family

While British Columbian foods and bachelor cooking represented significant changes in the everyday lives of settlers, no meals were described as symbolising home and family—and the absence or distance of these—more than the Christmas dinner. By the mid-Victorian era, a widely disseminated romantic ideal of Christmas had developed in Britain, emphasising that it was a holiday of food and family togetherness. These sentiments developed and coalesced around the Christmas dinner, which linked in emotion, imagination and representation the consumption of particular dishes with the presence of family.⁴²⁶ Although this idealised formulation

⁴²⁴ Harry Guillod in Smith, 'Journal of a Trip to Cariboo,' 209; and BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 2, Tommy Norbury to mother, Tobacco Plains, 6 December 1887.

⁴²⁵ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 2, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Tobacco Plains, 13 November 1887.

⁴²⁶ Bruce David Forbes, *Christmas: A Candid History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Elizabeth Hafkin Pleck, *Celebrating the Family: Ethnicity, Consumer Culture, and Family Rituals* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); and Broomfield, 'The Holidays, Celebrations, and Other Festivities,' chapter 8 in *Food and Cooking in Victorian England*.

was not experienced by all families in Britain, it became engrained in popular images and personal imaginations of the holiday, especially for those who found themselves far from home during the Christmas season.⁴²⁷ This was a time when distance, difference and disjuncture surfaced with particular force in family correspondence, as separated relatives struggled to articulate continued connections with one another despite diverging everyday lives.

Amor de Cosmos's Christmas 1858 editorial in his new Victoria newspaper, the *British Colonist*, underscored the extent to which the holiday was imagined in close connection with family and home: 'What a host of pleasant thoughts the mind calls up at the mention of the word Christmas!... From the cradle to the grave Christmas always presents pictures of family re-unions, social endearments and universal festivity.'⁴²⁸ The impossibility of such a family event was a fresh experience for many of the colony's new residents. Local conditions meant that they were also unable to acquire familiar holiday foods, which resulted in the production of local, hybrid traditions. Many men had to cook and eat the meal themselves, while others found themselves eating Christmas dinner alone in restaurants or hotels. The dinner came to carry particularly symbolic value in this context as letter-writers used food as a way of coming to terms with and giving meaning to changing traditions during a holiday when family togetherness was both important and impossible. Overall, they used correspondence as a key strategy for dealing with the poignant sense of distance, unfamiliarity and homesickness engendered by separation from family members and familiar meals. In particular, they described attempts to adapt home traditions to the British Columbian context, focused on shared memories and anticipated future dinners which they hoped to spend together. In the process, they used the meal as a symbol and vehicle for familial relationships, mobilising the imagery of Christmas dinner to evoke connection across the separations of time and space.

The prospect of a Christmas meal that did not taste like one's expectations and memories had an unsettling impact on Britons in British Columbia. In order to evoke a sense of tradition or home, settlers sought to recreate or adapt their families' Christmas meals to local contexts.⁴²⁹ Many reported to family with a sense of relief

⁴²⁷ BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch to brother John Birch, New Westminster, 8 January 1865.

⁴²⁸ Amor de Cosmos, 'Christmas,' *British Colonist*, 27 December 1858.

⁴²⁹ Edgar Fawcett, *Some Reminiscences of Old Victoria* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), 259. For a discussion of this in a wider imperial context, see Kaori O'Connor, 'The King's Christmas Pudding: Globalization, Recipes, and the Commodities of Empire,' *Journal of Global History* 4 (2009): 133.

and comfort that, as Robert Burnaby put it, ‘even so far away, the memory of Home customs, and jollifications is kept up all right well.’⁴³⁰ Burnaby was particularly insistent that the colony was able to produce Christmas dinners with familiar dishes, reporting to his sister on an 1860 hotel party that was not one of ‘your wretched half-starved Colony affairs, but a real good dinner with mock turtle soup and delectable entrees, turkey, plum pudding and half and half.’ A Christmas dinner the next day, hosted by the McKenzie family, included ‘a huge sirloin, a noble turkey, plum pudding and mince pies, just like the Xmas dinner of old home.’⁴³¹ In 1861, Burnaby again described his Christmas dinner as ‘regular English fare, like our own Xmas dinner, roast beef, turkey, plum pudding and mince pies!... So you can see we contrive to keep up the times and seasons, and to be as happy as we can be under our expatriation.’⁴³²

Other letters about Christmas dinner likewise emphasised the importance of ‘home’ traditions. Although imported food was difficult and expensive to obtain, settlers made exceptions for the Christmas dinner if at all possible. To this end, Edmund Verney reported on Victoria Christmases ‘sprinkled with negus’ while ‘the crannies were stopped with Scotch cake and bun.’⁴³³ Backwoods Christmas dinners were sometimes different than the elaborate urban spreads of nineteenth-century Victoria, but even rural meals were designed and described to connect with ‘civilised’ holiday dinners of times past and places distant. Tommy Norbury wrote a long description of his 1897 Christmas party. Although he had no family members in the province, he had made many friends in the Kootenay region and they gathered at his ranch for a Christmas meal. He hired a Chinese cook for the occasion, but when the cook left without warning, one of the guests—‘an excellent chef in disguise’—put

⁴³⁰ Robert Burnaby to sister Rose Burnaby, Victoria, 6 January 1860; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 130.

⁴³¹ Robert Burnaby to sister Rose Burnaby, Victoria, 6 January 1860; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 130.

⁴³² Robert Burnaby to mother Sarah Burnaby, Victoria, 26 December 1861; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 165.

⁴³³ Edmund Verney to father Harry Verney, Esquimalt, 24 December 1863; in Pritchard, *Vancouver Island Letters*, 110. Cecilia Helmcken later remembered childhood Christmas dinners that included many dishes that were common fare at middle-class Christmas tables in Britain. See John D. Adams, *Christmas in Old Victoria* (Victoria: Discover the Past, 2003), 45. See also excerpts from oral interviews, Rich Mole, *Season's Greetings from British Columbia's Past: Christmas as Celebrated in British Columbia from the 1880s to the 1930s* (Victoria: Provincial Archives, 1980), especially 7-11.

together a dinner which Norbury claimed ‘would have passed as good in civilization.’⁴³⁴

However, settlers were only able to emulate British Christmas celebrations as one layer in a complex hybrid of traditions. Even for the urban colonial elite with whom Burnaby dined in Victoria, Christmas was a mix of holiday food practices influenced by local and indigenous foods, fur trade culture, and dishes brought by settlers from around the world.⁴³⁵ While the Dallas family served British-style plum pudding and mince pies on Christmas 1859, for example, their black cook also served ‘a variety of sweets in vogue in the southern States,’ while the Helmckens’ Christmas dinners included a local aboriginal dish called *la broue* (or Indian ice cream), made from soapberries and water.⁴³⁶

Even apparently ‘British’ traditions often involved the substitution of colonial ingredients. In the 1860s, Susan Allison used local resources that reminded her of Britain, in the process creating specifically British Columbian versions of metropolitan traditions. As she later remembered, ‘we gathered oregon-grape leaves for holly, and roseberries judiciously sewed in through the leaves looked like berries. Snow berries took the place of mistletoe.’⁴³⁷ In the mid-nineteenth century, turkeys—increasingly the bird of choice for British Christmas dinners—were hard to acquire throughout British Columbia, not being native to the region, and thus were expensive if available at all. As a result, other birds became much more commonplace in the Christmas meal, especially wildfowl hunted by members of the household.⁴³⁸ By the 1870s, butchers in Victoria were procuring Christmas beef from the Douglas Lake Ranch in the Interior, while by the early 1880s, Lawrence Goodacre’s Queen’s Market advertised turkeys, geese, ducks, partridges, pheasants, sheep, bears and rabbits, as well as British Columbia beef, for the Christmas season. In 1880, one Victoria butcher also offered a particularly local Christmas special:

⁴³⁴ The menu appears to have been mostly local foods, although in British style and with some imported goods: ‘Oxtail soup. Grouse, turkey, duck, plum pudding, mince-pie, cheese and apples, plenty of lush, settled down with Benadictine and Maraschinos.’ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 12, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, Boxing Night 1897.

⁴³⁵ The fur trade had developed Christmas traditions that blended Aboriginal, French, British and other winter traditions. See Adams, *Christmas in Old Victoria*, 11. For more on fur trade cultures of food, see Elizabeth Vibert, *Traders’ Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997); and George Colpitts, ‘Moose-Nose and Buffalo Hump: The Amerindian Food Exchange in the British North American Fur Trade to 1840,’ in Kirkby and Luckins, *Dining on Turtles*, 64-81.

⁴³⁶ Adams, *Christmas in Old Victoria*, 35 and 46-47.

⁴³⁷ Susan Allison in Ormsby, *A Pioneer Gentlewoman*, 25.

⁴³⁸ Fawcett, *Some Reminiscences of Old Victoria*, 156.

‘eighteen dozen glass jars of pure Bear’s Grease... put up from the well known bear killed at Cedar Hill last summer by Messrs. Irvine Bros.’⁴³⁹ Other elements of the meal were also locally produced, acquired or substituted, but plum pudding, even in the remotest part of the backwoods, was represented as a dish that could not be compromised. This appears to have been cooked by at least some British Columbians, although Kaori O’Connor suggests that puddings were also mailed from Britain to family members around the empire during this period.⁴⁴⁰

While family letters explained in detail the contents of Christmas dinners in British Columbia, underscoring both the sense of (British) home that they evoked, and the local flavour that they acquired, this correspondence also discussed the larger social context of eating the holiday meal with family so far away. Settlers quickly found ways of cultivating a sense of togetherness in British Columbia that, although they did not fully make up for the absence or distance of family (as suggested by the frequency of the Christmas correspondence itself), offered a sense of comfort, company and familiarity in a place that could feel very distant on holidays. As Robert Burnaby assured his family, ‘you must not think that because I am a waif and stray on the Pacific that a dull lonely Xmas is inevitable.’⁴⁴¹ Although Arthur Birch complained in 1865 that ‘Our Xmas festivities have been limited,’ his celebrations had included a dinner that he hosted, a Christmas Eve dinner and games hosted by the Governor, morning and evening Christmas church services, three more dinner parties, and a dance at Government House.⁴⁴² On a smaller scale, groups of friends without families might gather together for a meal cooked by one of the men or by a hired cook, while it was quite common for men without families to be invited to dinners at friends’ homes. The McKenzie family, living on Craigflower Farm just outside of Victoria, became the regular hosts for members of the colonial elite who did not have family nearby.

Those without such local ties struggled to combat holiday loneliness and isolation. Nova Scotian David Higgins’s first Christmas in Victoria was in 1860. Although he was not a first-generation British immigrant, his sentiments on this day

⁴³⁹ Adams, *Christmas in Old Victoria*, 65-67.

⁴⁴⁰ BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 12, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, Boxing Night 1897; and O’Connor, ‘The King’s Christmas Pudding,’ 134.

⁴⁴¹ Robert Burnaby to mother Sarah Burnaby, Victoria, 23 December 1859; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 128.

⁴⁴² BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch to brother John Birch, New Westminster, 8 January 1865.

echoed the homesickness and distance felt by many separated families during the holiday season. As he wrote, 'I feel more homesick to-day than ever before in my life and the idea of eating my Christmas dinner alone fills me with melancholy thoughts.' Finally deciding to ask a new acquaintance if he could have dinner with her family, he appealed to her sense of pity and indicated that Christmas was no time to be alone: 'I am a waif and stray, alone in the world. I am almost a stranger here.'⁴⁴³ Others lacked even recent acquaintances to ask for hospitality on Christmas. Those in urban settlements without local connections and invitations to friends' homes resorted to hotels and bars, which offered affordable specials for holiday meals.⁴⁴⁴ On Christmas 1858, the *Panama* arrived on Vancouver Island carrying a group of English immigrants that included Robert Burnaby, Arthur Bushby and the Moody family. Upon arrival, according to Bushby, he and his single male friends from the ship 'went to the only grog shop & drank a Merry Xmas in a glass of good scotch whiskey.'⁴⁴⁵ They then went to Victoria's Hotel de France to eat in what Burnaby described as 'a very decent comfortable restaurant, which if it were not of planks and generally of fragile character, would do very well in Les'ter Square or Soho.' There, the men had a Christmas dinner of 'good soup, salmon, boiled turkey, steaks, mutton, fried potatoes, apple fritters, rhubarb tart, apples, nuts, etc. lots of bitter beer, and *café noir* to wind up.' Reporting on this meal to his parents in Leicestershire, Burnaby added, 'I could dilate on the glories of that dinner, but time and space being valuable you must imagine it all,' reminding both reader and writer of the limitations of communication by post, and the necessity of imagination for understanding one another's experiences.⁴⁴⁶

While those in British Columbia developed these strategies for cultivating commensality over Christmas meals away from family, communication with distant relatives also continued to play a central role in their experience of the holiday dinner. Letters suggested that sadness took on a new role at the centre of Christmas dinner as writers visualised past and present Christmases in their family home. Writing to her mother, Mary Moody described her first Christmas in British Columbia as 'saddish,' spent thinking about her family in Newcastle and dwelling on

⁴⁴³ D. W. Higgins, 'My First Christmas in Victoria,' *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 22 December 1907.

⁴⁴⁴ Adams, *Christmas in Old Victoria*, 44.

⁴⁴⁵ Arthur Bushby in Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., 'The Journal of Arthur Thomas Bushby, 1858-1859,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 21 (1957-58): 116.

⁴⁴⁶ Robert Burnaby to mother and 'all,' Victoria, 26 December 1858; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 59.

‘past days wh[ich] have gone forever.’ She only found comfort in the idea that ‘ere long we may be at home altogether’ for a Christmas, a hope that permanent settlers could not have.⁴⁴⁷ Robert Burnaby, another resident of British Columbia who had arrived on a temporary basis, also wrote to his family with hopes of future Christmases together. However, when reminded of his present circumstances, he mourned ‘the distance and the cruel oceans that roll between us.’⁴⁴⁸

As a way of dealing with such vivid and difficult emotions, relatives emphasised the power of thinking about each other over dinner in lieu of physical togetherness. In the early 1860s, the Verney siblings were scattered around the British Empire, with George in India, Emily in Malta, and Edmund on Vancouver Island. Writing to his father just before Christmas, Edmund was reassured by the idea that ‘our thoughts will be with each other on that day.’⁴⁴⁹ Settlers produced striking images about these connections of thought. One ship passenger headed to British Columbia in 1863 thought longingly of his family at Christmas dinner in ‘old England’, writing:

let all derive some satisfaction from the knowledge that we too are not forgotten, and that on this day a tie of thought is... established and extended over thousands and thousands of miles, through which all think reciprocally of those that are near and dear to them, and look forward to a recurrence of the happy days and scenes that are associated with this greatest of all anniversaries.⁴⁵⁰

To similar ends, Robert Burnaby told his mother that, over Christmas dinner in 1859, ‘my heart bounded right away over the mountain and wave into your very midst.’⁴⁵¹

Separated families found comfort in such notions like the ‘tie of thought’ that could stretch across vast distances and connect those who were, emotionally if not physically, near and dear. This imagery of connection depended in part on a sense of simultaneity. Family members did not simply think about each other, and write about such thoughts, but they actually sought to situate distant relatives in particular times

⁴⁴⁷ BCA, MS-0060, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, vol. 2, Mary Moody to [?], on board *HMS Satellite*, Victoria, Christmas Day 1858.

⁴⁴⁸ Robert Burnaby to mother Sarah Burnaby, Victoria, 23 December 1859; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 129.

⁴⁴⁹ Edmund Verney to father Harry Verney, Esquimalt, 23 December 1864; in Pritchard, *Vancouver Island Letters*, 238.

⁴⁵⁰ *Emigrant Soldiers’ Gazette and Cape Horn Chronicle*, 25 December 1858.

⁴⁵¹ Robert Burnaby to mother Sarah Burnaby, Victoria, 23 December 1859; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 130.

and places, imagining what they were doing at that very moment, aided by memories of Christmases spent together. Edmund Verney, for example, not only dated but timed one Christmas letter, telling his father, ‘with me it is 7 P.M. so now with you it is about 3 A.M., and you are all snoring in your beds, and trying to sleep off the effects of your heavy indigestible Christmas dinners.’⁴⁵² Similarly, Robert Burnaby described the conversation over one Christmas dinner in which all guests ‘wondered what the good folks at home were after, not forgetting that you were 8 hours and a quarter ahead of us.’⁴⁵³ This was accompanied by an expectation of reciprocity. After his first Christmas in Victoria, Burnaby reported to his family, ‘All our thoughts travelled home, you may well believe, and I pictured to myself your own happy circle, where I know I was well remembered and talked about.’⁴⁵⁴ Similarly, Verney wrote to his father, ‘I dare say you and Freddy, and Uncle & Aunt Fremantle, and Uncle Frederic have dined together, and, thought lovingly of the absent ones.’⁴⁵⁵ For those far from home, the confident knowledge that family members missed and thought about them brought some level of comfort and connection.

The ‘first and best’ toast, that to ‘absent friends,’ was the more formal site for such sentiments at Christmas dinners in both Britain and British Columbia.⁴⁵⁶ It called up an imagination of distant family members in a ritual manner that evoked senses of tradition, memory and simultaneity. Describing the toast in letters, separated relatives confirmed the continuing salience of emotional connections to one another, and indicated their expectation of reciprocity. Reminding his father of the importance of remembering both past Christmases and those far away during present Christmases, Edmund Verney wrote:

I shall be with you in thought... on Christmas day, and I know that the toast of ‘the absent ones’ will be drunk thoughtfully and affectionately by you, as you and I, and Freddy, and Uncle and Aunt Fremantle drank it together last Christmas day: when you receive this letter you will say, ‘ah I wrote and told Edmund we had done

⁴⁵² Edmund Verney to father Harry Verney, Esquimalt, 25 December 1864; in Pritchard, *Vancouver Island Letters*, 238.

⁴⁵³ Robert Burnaby to mother Sarah Burnaby, Victoria, 26 December 1861; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 164. The difference was usually calculated as eight hours (as it is today), but the times were variable before the global standardization of time zones, as Burnaby’s letter indicates.

⁴⁵⁴ Robert Burnaby to mother and ‘all,’ Victoria, 26 December 1858; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 58.

⁴⁵⁵ Edmund Verney to father Harry Verney, Esquimalt, 25 December 1864; in Pritchard, *Vancouver Island Letters*, 238.

⁴⁵⁶ Robert Burnaby to mother Sarah Burnaby, Victoria, 23 December 1859; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 130.

so'... wherever I may dine on that day I shall drink 'absent friends.'⁴⁵⁷

This shared toast carried emotional weight for Verney as an action that symbolised the remembrances of his family, and a continuing belonging with them. For Burnaby, similar feelings were encoded in the toast:

Ah! how I thought of you, and the happy family rings of brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, that will have gathered at Liverpool, and London, Stonton and wherever dear Harry may be: and I felt sure that at each there would be a kind remembrance of me, as you may be sure there was of every one of you when my kind old friend McKenzie gave us the toast of '*absent friends*.'⁴⁵⁸

For these families, the toast to absent members represented a ritualised tie of thought that connected them together over the holiday meal, offering comfort in the idea that relatives were enacting the same traditions, words and feelings. Despite the physical distances of empire and the unfamiliar circumstances in British Columbia, the Christmas meal could thus still bring the family together, however fleetingly, facilitated by epistolary communication that shared knowledge and affections.

Coda: food, family, empire

In letters from British Columbia, Christmas dinner was represented as a confluence of two activities: eating particular foods and thinking about absent family. At the intersections of food and family, settlers suggested, were reminders of the continuing importance of memory (past Christmases), the possibility of connection across space (present Christmases), and the hope of reunion (future Christmases). While this worked in particular ways in British Columbia, as Kaori O'Connor writes, Christmas traditions acted as portable symbols of family, home, identity and Britishness more generally across the empire, even as they were always and necessarily inflected with different local conditions:

English newspapers and journals of the Victorian and Edwardian periods abound with accounts of Christmas pudding consumed on the shores of Lake Rudolph, accompanied by champagne and the toast to 'absent friends and home'; of Christmas pudding carried on an expedition to New Guinea, where it was cooked by immersion in a spring of boiling mud; of Christmas dinner in the South African

⁴⁵⁷ Edmund Verney to father Harry Verney, Esquimalt, 8 December 1862; in Pritchard, *Vancouver Island Letters*, 108.

⁴⁵⁸ Robert Burnaby to mother Sarah Burnaby, Victoria, 26 December 1861; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 164. See also Robert Burnaby to mother Sarah Burnaby, Victoria, 23 December 1859; in McLeod and McGeachie, *Land of Promise*, 59-60.

veldt, consisting of wildebeest steak and a pudding made of rice, ostrich egg, raisins, and currants; of Christmas in the Australian bush spent feasting on a roast haunch of kangaroo and a pudding made of soaked biscuit, sugar, and brandy; of resolutely eating in the Sinai desert a Christmas pudding that the native cook had mistakenly doused with methylated spirits instead of brandy; of struggling through the Burma hills on foot in full evening dress for the sake of pudding and a Christmas game of snapdragon.⁴⁵⁹

In such newspaper articles and journals, as well as in their own personal letters, Britons thus expressed and were exposed to the idea that food could link distant people and places.

This was not only true during the holiday season. Food and empire were also entangled more generally in everyday practice in a wide range of ways from the symbolic to the material. From one perspective, food spurred the very expansion of empire as developing British tastes for new foods—especially sugar, tea and spices—were deeply implicated in the extension of economic and political interests around the world. In this sense, the production, exchange and consumption of imperial foodstuffs were linked with a number of themes in domestic and imperial histories, including industrial development in metropole and colonies, the growth of trans-imperial markets, the institution of slavery, the improvement of transportation infrastructure, and the manipulation of local environments. At the same time, these imported imperial foods penetrated ideas of Britishness in the metropole, as new dishes were incorporated into the collection of social and cultural markers commonly invoked to represent a national identity. Tea especially came to link imperial economies, the metropolitan everyday, and a portable, consumable sense of Britishness.

This imagined connection between food and identity was also central to everyday life in colonial places, where meals were given the power to symbolise or challenge senses of self in new contexts. For explorers, traders, missionaries, settlers and others, difficult environmental, economic, political and social conditions could sometimes mean that food was an issue of mere survival in the empire. More generally, Britons encountered indigenous food practices and local food products that undermined the possibilities of eating familiar foods in expected ways. In this context, cooking cultures, dining etiquette and meal composition could work as daily enactments of identity, inclusion and exclusion, whether these were defined by

⁴⁵⁹ O'Connor, 'The King's Christmas Pudding,' 133-34.

nation, race, gender and/or class. In taste, but also in sight, smell and touch, sensory experiences of food enabled Britons to consume and embody particular images of themselves.

It was a sense of distance and difference from 'home' that gave these images particular intensity. Across the British Empire, a range of sources—personal letters, but also household manuals, novels, medical reports, memoirs, newspapers and others—insistently framed particular food practices as signs of civilisation, Britishness and imperial legitimacy in contexts where these categories were anything but stable and secure.⁴⁶⁰ In British Columbia, 'home' took on particular meanings in relation to the elements of familiar metropolitan life that were challenged or absent in the colony. Difficult terrain made transportation, communication and trade at best complicated and inconsistent, while settlements were largely transient and isolated. Most of British Columbia's predominantly male settler population lived in temporary gold-mining communities, backwoods lumber or mining camps, or remote ranches. Even towns and cities could feel distinctly isolated and uncivilised when compared to Britain. In combination with long-term or permanent separations from family members, these factors meant that metropolitan expectations of food acquisition, gendered cooking responsibilities, and dining etiquette were a daily impossibility in British Columbia. Indeed, new configurations of food practices could come to reflect and represent some of the most significant demographic, economic, environmental and social differences between British and British Columbian life. As such, discussions of food worked as a useful and common lens through which to articulate the meanings of the colonial everyday.

While British Columbians frequently explained their daily experiences through anecdotes about food acquisition, preparation and consumption, Anglo-Indians wrote about food in a different way. In a May 1858 letter to his mother, Franklin Richardson Kendall described his daily life in Bhandora. Although he mentioned taking tea and toast at 5:30 a.m. and dinner at 7:00 p.m., his letter otherwise glossed over the details of food; rather, he focused on the timing and modes of transportation, and the nature of his long workday.⁴⁶¹ While this is only one

⁴⁶⁰ For the Indian context, see Burton, *Raj at Table*, 10; Blunt, 'Imperial Geographies of Home,' 421-40; and Procida, 'Feeding the Imperial Appetite,' 123-49.

⁴⁶¹ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 6-8 May 1858. For similar examples, see the travel letters of Bertram Portal, which likewise gloss over the details of food in favour of other themes framed as better describing places, people and

example, in general Anglo-Indian family letters did not situate food as a particularly telling aspect of their daily experiences, with these discussions appearing with less frequency and intensity when compared with British Columbian correspondence. Explaining this type of difference is neither simple nor straightforward. However, a consideration of Anglo-Indian correspondence about food does offer a contextualisation and an unsettling of conclusions about the relationships among food, family, identity and place between Britain and British Columbia.

In some senses, although they appeared less often, Anglo-Indian passages about food contained broadly similar themes to their British Columbian counterparts. In both places, taste was described as evoking connections—sometimes deeply personal and emotional—across time and space, as food practices seemed to reflect or confirm certain claims to belonging, memory and self. Discussions about the availability, quality or taste of particular foods in India were usually paths by which individuals articulated broader relationships to British people and places. Facing the challenge of accessing temperate produce in a tropical environment, for example, Anglo-Indians commented on the availability of familiar vegetables in the cold season and the unavailability of other food items associated with ‘home’ meals.⁴⁶² Meanwhile, the taste of certain foods could be framed as a reminder of distance from home. For Kendall, a peach tasted at Bombay’s Government House ‘seemed to call up a slight remembrance of Cornwall, though of course they do not deserve to be named in the same day with Pelyn peaches,’ the latter his family home.⁴⁶³ Pollie Keen wrote, ‘although we get lots of fresh things they don’t have the nice taste of things at home.’⁴⁶⁴ Home, in these cases, could mean

experiences. BL, Mss Eur F494/1, Bertram Percy Portal, letters to mother including Ootacamund, 15 April 1896; Calicut, 29 September 1896; Mangalore, 6 October 1896; and Bellary, 14 October 1896.

⁴⁶² For example, BL, Mss Eur C176/148, Henry Beveridge, Henry Beveridge to mother Jemima Beveridge, Barisal, 10 November 1872; BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother and brothers, Sialkot, 30 March 1890; and BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother, Sialkot, 21 April 1891, 8 November 1891 and 20 December 1891. See also Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 71; and Burton, *Raj at Table*, 160–75.

⁴⁶³ BL, Eur Mss Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 7 February 1859. See also BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 22 September 1890; and BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Hunza, 29 September 1895. Beynon complained about what he saw as the inauthentic taste of Indian fruits, writing to his mother about local mulberries that ‘were all ripe but... taste a fraud & have not much taste about them.’ BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, [?], 30 May 1895.

⁴⁶⁴ BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, [n.d.] June 1890.

Britain generally, but more often familiar foods were associated with certain places, personal histories, and especially family gardens.⁴⁶⁵

As with British Columbia, Anglo-Indian letters described attempts to replicate home tastes, and disappointments when this was ultimately found to be impossible. In so doing, epistolary discussions of food could reveal information about the rhythms of daily life in India. While in British Columbia, much of the focus fell on local hunting, bachelor cooking and backwoods markets, more established agriculture and transportation meant that foodstuffs were widely available for Anglo-Indians to purchase, with some individuals occasionally hunting for fowl but generally not depending on the gun for their daily meals.⁴⁶⁶ In addition, the vast majority of cooking was done by Indian servants, with most Anglo-Indians of the ruling classes having very little experience in their own kitchens.⁴⁶⁷ In this context, letters were more likely to list the content of meals without a wider discussion of their acquisition and preparation.

Meal composition, however, had long been invested with importance and anxiety for Anglo-Indians. During the period of Company rule, they had been renowned in the metropole for dining habits represented as gluttonous and excessive, but by the mid-nineteenth century, the ruling classes had begun to turn away from such extravagant consumption of meat, alcohol and Indian food. This was in part in response to changing ideas of health, race, culture and the body, as medical advice increasingly emphasised moderation and blandness as an antidote to the perceived dangers of degeneration in India.⁴⁶⁸ Food, in this sense, became a key

⁴⁶⁵ BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, [n.d.] 22 September 1890; and BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 9 August 1891. Material and emotional connections to these places could be furthered by letters containing seeds to be grown in imperial sites. BCA, MS-0505, Helmcken family, box 1, file 15, Catharine Helmcken to son J. S. Helmcken, Whitechapel, 23 November 1866; BCA, MS-0505, Helmcken family, box 1, file 16, Catharine Helmcken to son J. S. Helmcken, London, 7 August 1866; and BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother and brothers, Sialkot, 30 March 1890.

⁴⁶⁶ When Pollie Keen fired her cook in December 1891, she found herself preparing meals for her family for the first time in two years. Her decision to 'go on doing my cooking for a time' seems to have been unusual. BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 20 December 1891.

⁴⁶⁷ BL, Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, Emily Hartt to sister Fanny Buck, Rawal Pindie, 21 March 1883. See also Procida, 'Feeding the Imperial Appetite.'

⁴⁶⁸ Achaya, *Indian Food*, 176; Brigid Allen, ed., *Food: An Oxford Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 237; and Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 26 and 28-29. For more on British discourses on climate, disease and health, see Mark Harrison, "'The Tender Frame of Man': Disease, Climate, and Racial Difference in India and the West Indies, 1760-1860," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 70, 1 (1996): 68-93; and Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions*.

aspect of daily life through which to understand and control the risks posed to British bodies by Indian life. These concerns were reflected in Anglo-Indian family letters where discussions, questions and advice about food frequently centred on climate and disease, and where particular ways of eating were represented as healthy or unhealthy.⁴⁶⁹

These changes to food practices came at a time when Indian cultures and people were increasingly framed as inferior and uncivilised in British imperial discourses. In this context, the treatment of British bodies became more concerned with visual displays of etiquette and gentility as outward signs of British identity and civilisation.⁴⁷⁰ While food itself did not entail the kind of visibility commonly associated with performances of imperial power in this sense, formal dinners could act as spectacles that were seen to confirm British identity and rule.⁴⁷¹ Even in everyday meals within the home, however, Anglo-Indians increasingly insisted on foods and dining etiquette that could be associated with the metropole regardless, or perhaps because, of the impracticality or unavailability of such meals in India.⁴⁷² While this meant that many ate roast dinners in the hot season, some Anglo-Indians also used the post to receive parcels of home foods such as hams, butter and Christmas puddings, which were more difficult to acquire in India. These packages enabled closer connections to metropolitan and familial food practices, at least within limits.⁴⁷³

In general, British Columbian descriptions of hunting and gathering, bachelor cooking and backwoods markets positioned food as a central vehicle for explaining the nature and differences of the colonial everyday. Anglo-Indian letters, in contrast,

⁴⁶⁹ BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Sialkot, 30 April 1856; BL, Mss Eur F142/55, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Willy Robinson to brother Henry Robinson, [?], 27 April 1862; BL, Mss Eur C176/149, Henry Beveridge, Jemima Beveridge to son Allie Beveridge, St Mungo's Cottage, 28 March 1865; BL, Mss Eur C176/148, Henry Beveridge to mother, Jemima Beveridge, Cooch Behar, 30 April 1865; and BL, Mss Eur 445/1, Lt.-Col. Alexander Hervey Blackwood Bruce, Alick Bruce to sister Jane Alexander, Mussoorie, 7 October 1874.

⁴⁷⁰ Burton, *Raj at Table*, 8; and Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 67.

⁴⁷¹ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 160.

⁴⁷² Of course, they never reproduced food exactly as it was in Britain; rather, as Collingham skillfully demonstrates, Anglo-Indians produced a hybrid food culture in which they ate curries, used Indian food vocabulary, cooked with Indian spices, and relied on Indian produce while continuing to insist on the Britishness of their food practices. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 71-2 and 158.

⁴⁷³ For example, BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 16 May 1858; BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 26 March 1890; and BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, [n.d.] February 1891.

tended to dwell much less on issues of food, although broader concerns with the relationship between food, home, family, identity and place were threaded through correspondence from both places in sometimes similar ways. When they were included in letters, Anglo-Indian passages about food also emphasised its ability to produce and shape difference, health and the body—issues that characterised British anxieties about the Indian context more broadly. Overall, however, these latter concerns tended to be discussed in other ways; even when food was involved, the focus might fall more on the process of dressing for dinner than it did on the content of the meal itself.⁴⁷⁴ Indeed, as the next chapter will suggest, the visual performance of identity through dress could be a more central and anxious topic of Anglo-Indian family correspondence, one that was seen to better explain their everyday experiences and relationships with the metropole than the acquisition, preparation and consumption of local foods.

⁴⁷⁴ Several scholars have argued that, in the second half of the nineteenth century, Anglo-Indian evening dress (including for informal occasions) became a symbol of British values and moral codes. Even dining in ‘wild’ spaces occurred in travelling tents with formal dress and table attendants. Burton, *Raj at Table*, 28; and Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 159–61. For a discussion of this in the African context, see Helen Callaway, ‘Dressing for Dinner in the Bush: Rituals of Self-Definition and British Imperial Authority,’ in *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts*, ed. Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher (Oxford: Berg, 1992), 232–47.

Chapter 4. Fashioning Families: Letters about Dress and Appearance in India

In April 1897, William George Lawrence Beynon arrived at his sister's house in Lahore. Two years earlier, he had expressed concern about Kate's interest in Indian missionary work and had encouraged her to stay in England to help 'the poor at home' rather than 'what we call "one of milk & two of coffee" out here.'⁴⁷⁵ However, on arriving in Lahore, he found that Kate was well-respected and well-positioned in the community, with 'a certain status... which seems to be recognized by the people here.' Writing to their mother with a glowing report of his sister, he concluded, 'I think the dress has had something to do with it.... [It] is good as it is a sort of recognized uniform which people can understand.'⁴⁷⁶ Although Beynon did not expand further on these impressions, his framing of dress as a visual sign that could facilitate communication between and about people points to the potential symbolic importance of clothing in the late-nineteenth-century Indian context.

The existing literature on clothing and colonialism in India primarily focuses on the British interest in dress as a marker of race and difference, the place of clothing in performances of imperial spectacle and authority, and Indian uses of dress in anti-colonial movements.⁴⁷⁷ In this chapter, I turn my attention to the place of dress and the dressed body in family correspondence between Britain and India. Building from Beynon's observation about the symbolic and communicative power of clothing, and from these historiographical understandings of dress and imperialism, the chapter explores a range of ways in which Anglo-Indian family correspondence positioned dress and appearance as critical markers of identity and connection between the two sites. First, I show that descriptions and explanations of Anglo-Indian clothing became a key route through which letter-writers produced

⁴⁷⁵ BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Gilgit, 12 August 1895.

⁴⁷⁶ BL, Mss Eur D830/24, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Lahore, 19 April 1897.

⁴⁷⁷ See, for example, C. A. Bayly, 'The Origins of Swadeshi (Home Industry): Cloth and Indian Society, 1700-1930,' in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 285-322; Cohn, 'Cloth, Clothes and Colonialism: India in the Nineteenth Century,' chapter 5 in *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*; and Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*.

family forms of imperial knowledge, and imperial forms of family relationships. This process was further facilitated by the material exchange of sewn or purchased clothing, which I suggest further linked Britain and India through family bodies, knowledge, emotion, obligation and imagination. Finally, the chapter explores the ways in which Anglo-Indians used letters to give meaning to their physical appearance in relation to distant family members. When they did so, letter-writers framed their bodies as forms of familial connection in and across imperial spaces, but these were also connections that always contained disconcerting possibilities of difference too. Overall, the chapter argues that Anglo-Indian correspondence situated dress and appearance as key elements in identity formation, knowledge production and family relationships between Britain and India.

Conceptualising dress and appearance

Beynon's observation that clothing could be a symbol that 'people can understand' offers a useful entry point into conceptualising dress and appearance for the purposes of this chapter. Joanne Eicher and Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins define dress as 'an assemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body displayed by a person in communicating with other human beings.'⁴⁷⁸ The interrelated term 'appearance,' they suggest, is 'in some ways... more than dress and in other ways less... it takes into account body features, movements, and positions, as well as the visible body modifications and supplements of dress... [and] it leaves out what may be some of the more intimately apprehended properties of dress, that is, touch, odor, taste, and sound.'⁴⁷⁹ The existing literature on clothing usually focuses on its characteristics as 'a coded sensory system of non-verbal communication that aids human interaction in space and time.'⁴⁸⁰ Building from these conceptualisations, I find dress and appearance to be useful for thinking widely about the ways in which the adorned and interpreted body was used to communicate about family, place, difference and empire in late-nineteenth-century India. While the visual aspects of dress were especially important in face-to-face interactions, for Anglo-Indian families

⁴⁷⁸ Joanne B. Eicher and Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, 'Definition and Classification of Dress: Implications for Analysis of Gender Roles,' in Barnes and Eicher, *Dress and Gender*, 15.

⁴⁷⁹ Eicher and Roach-Higgins, 'Definition and Classification of Dress,' 13-14.

⁴⁸⁰ Joanne B. Eicher, 'Introduction: Dress as Expression of Ethnic Identity,' in *Dress and Ethnicity: Change across Space and Time*, ed. Joanne B. Eicher (Oxford: Berg, 1995), 1. On clothing and the visual, see Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption* (London: Allen Lane, 1979), 66; Beverly Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660-1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1997), 6; and Brent Shannon, *The Cut of His Coat: Men, Dress, and Consumer Culture in Britain, 1860-1914* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 14.

separated across imperial distances, epistolary discussions about dress also played an important role in producing identities and relationships.

In framing dress in this way, I am influenced by a growing interdisciplinary literature on dress and appearance.⁴⁸¹ The study of dress in history has grown in popularity over the last two decades, although the field has much longer roots in art history, anthropology, sociology and museum studies. Until the latter half of the twentieth century, academic studies generally focused either on 'fashion' (characterised as Western, modern, changing, *haute couture* and in many cases denigrated as frivolous) or on 'traditional dress' (characterised as non-Western, static and largely the focus of ethnographers).⁴⁸² Much of this early work was done by museum curators, collectors and costume historians working outside or on the fringes of the academy.⁴⁸³ Historically grounded studies of the wider place of dress in society began to appear more frequently in the 1960s, as approaches diversified and began to engage more critically with ideas of historical change, identity and social relations. Economic and social historians became concerned with the place of dress in production and industrialisation, while a range of theorists explored the semiotics of clothing and argued for an understanding of dress as a visual 'language'.⁴⁸⁴ Since the 1970s, the field has expanded in this direction, with scholars now primarily

⁴⁸¹ For more extensive overviews, see Sandra Niessen and Anne Brydon, 'Introduction: Adorning the Body,' in *Consuming Fashion: Adorning the Transnational Body*, ed. Anne Brydon and Sandra Niessen (Oxford: Berg, 1998), ix-xvii; William J. F. Keenan, 'Introduction: "Sartor Resartus" Restored: Dress Studies in Carlylean Perspective,' in *Dressed to Impress: Looking the Part*, ed. William J. F. Keenan (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 1-49; Lou Taylor, *The Study of Dress History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Lou Taylor, *Establishing Dress History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); and Barbara Burman and Carole Turbin, 'Introduction: Material Strategies Engendered,' in *Material Strategies: Dress and Gender in Historical Perspective*, ed. Barbara Burman and Carole Turbin (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 1-11.

⁴⁸² For one overview of this division, see Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson, 'Introduction: Body Dressing,' in *Body Dressing*, ed. Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 1-2. Key early works on Western fashion include J. C. Flugel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (London: Hogarth, 1930), while contemporary analyses of early fashion and dress theorists include Michael Carter, *Fashion Classics from Carlyle to Barthes* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); and Ruth P. Rubinstein, 'Nineteenth-Century Theories of Clothing,' chapter 2 in *Dress Codes: Meanings and Messages in American Culture* (Oxford: Westview, 1995). For an overview of the history of anthropology and Indian dress, see Emma Tarlo, *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India* (London: Hurst, 1996), 2-6.

⁴⁸³ For some considerations of material culture studies in the writing of dress history, see Niessen and Brydon, 'Adorning the Body,' ix; Burman and Turbin, 'Material Strategies Engendered,' 1; Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*; Steeve O. Buckridge, *The Language of Dress: Resistance and Accommodation in Jamaica, 1760-1890* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2004), 1; and Taylor, *Establishing Dress History*.

⁴⁸⁴ See Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System*, trans. Matthew Ward and Richard Howard (London: Cape, 1985); Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes*, rev. ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 1992); Rubinstein, *Dress Codes*, 6-7; John Styles, 'Dress in History: Reflections on a Contested Terrain,' *Fashion Theory* 2, 4 (November 1998): 387; Patrizia Calefato, *The Clothed Body*, trans. Lisa Adams (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 5; and Entwistle and Wilson, 'Body Dressing,' 2.

concerned with the social meanings encoded in clothing by wearer and observer. As a result, there has been increasing attention to the ways in which dress shapes and reflects individual choices, social relationships, understandings of the body, and the categorisation of people, with clothing positioned as a non-verbal, visual marker of class, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, marital status and religion.⁴⁸⁵ At the same time, while dress may operate as a sign system, historians have also continued to explore the ways in which it shaped and participated in changing modes of production, patterns of consumption, and local and global economies.⁴⁸⁶

Overall, the recent scholarship frames dress as a portable form and marker of identity, relationship and belonging—a symbolic code allowing people to manipulate their bodies to communicate about group membership and individual identity.⁴⁸⁷ The meanings assigned to dress, however, are not static or stable. Rather, this is a continuous performance given meaning through everyday repetitions and renegotiations, or what Patrizia Calefato calls the ‘ongoing construction of material identity’ through dress behaviour.⁴⁸⁸ To this end, Leslie Rabine argues that clothing takes on a ‘mythic, ritualistic dimension’ through the ‘daily donning of clothing and makeup... in mundane life.’⁴⁸⁹ It is this repetitive re-enactment involved in dress—the extent to which movements, meanings and encounters with clothing become banal and taken for granted—that gives it such symbolic weight.

At the same time, these meanings are constantly reworked by context. As Alison Lurie argues, ‘the meaning of any costume depends on circumstances. It is not “spoken” in a vacuum, but at a specific place and time, any change in which may

⁴⁸⁵ Key examples from the early period include Mary-Ellen Roach and Joanne B. Eicher, eds., *Dress, Adornment, and the Social Order* (London: Wiley, 1965); and Anne Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes* (New York: Penguin, 1988). For overviews, see Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher, ‘Introduction,’ in Barnes and Eicher, *Dress and Gender*, 1-7; and Kim K. P. Johnson and Sharron J. Lennon, ‘Appearance and Social Power,’ in *Appearance and Power*, ed. Kim K. P. Johnson and Sharron J. Lennon (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 1. For a particularly relevant study on dress, nation and identity, see Christopher Breward, Becky Conekin, and Caroline Cox, eds., *The Englishness of English Dress* (Oxford: Berg, 2002). For key studies that bring together analyses of clothing, identity and the body, see Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson, eds., *Body Dressing* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000); and Calefato, *The Clothed Body*.

⁴⁸⁶ Amy de la Haye and Elizabeth Wilson, ‘Introduction,’ in *Defining Dress: Dress as Object, Meaning and Identity*, ed. Amy de la Haye and Elizabeth Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 5.

⁴⁸⁷ Eicher and Roach-Higgins, ‘Definition and Classification of Dress,’ 16-17. See also Barnes and Eicher, ‘Introduction,’ 1-3; Diana Crane, ‘Clothing Behavior as Non-Verbal Resistance: Marginal Women and Alternative Dress in the Nineteenth Century,’ *Fashion Theory* 3, 2 (May 1999): 242; Buckridge, *The Language of Dress*, 14; and Shannon, *The Cut of His Coat*, 14.

⁴⁸⁸ Patrizia Calefato, ‘Fashion and Worldliness: Language and Imagery of the Clothed Body,’ *Fashion Theory* 1, 1 (February 1997): 71. See also Leslie W. Rabine, ‘Not a Mere Ornament: Tradition, Modernity and Colonialism in Kenyan and Western Clothing,’ *Fashion Theory* 1, 2 (May 1997): 155.

⁴⁸⁹ Rabine, ‘Not a Mere Ornament,’ 160.

alter its meaning.⁴⁹⁰ In the context of British India, manifestations of imperial power and challenges to rule were deeply invested in the changing relationship between bodies and dress practices, which were increasingly and actively used to define and unsettle distinctions between colonisers and colonised.⁴⁹¹ Bernard Cohn, Emma Tarlo and Elizabeth Collingham have framed British attempts, both formal and informal, to regulate their own clothing, and that of Indians, as an integral part of the production of colonial knowledge, power and rule, and as a potent tool in imperial definitions of race and difference. Scholars have also examined the ways in which Indians challenged, reworked and adapted meanings of dress for their own purposes, particularly as organised Indian nationalism grew at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴⁹² It was in this anxious context that Anglo-Indians wrote so insistently and repeatedly about their dress practices in correspondence with family members in Britain; the meanings and ideas produced through their letters, then, were inflected with wider discourses on empire, difference, identity and rule.

Anglo-Indian discussions of dress were also grounded in the complicated relationship between clothing and family for Britons in the empire. In the existing historiography, dress and appearance have primarily been framed as a matter of personal, individual expression or of group identity, with the family playing a much more peripheral role, if present at all.⁴⁹³ For example, much of the recent literature on Victorian dress focuses on individual or societal negotiations of gendered consumerism, with spaces of consumption targeted at men or women as individuals rather than as actors in a family.⁴⁹⁴ However, for Anglo-Indian families divided

⁴⁹⁰ Lurie, *Language of Clothes*, 12-13.

⁴⁹¹ For a broader conceptualisation of dress, appearance and power, see Wendy Parkins, 'Introduction: (Ad)dressing Citizens,' in *Fashioning the Body Politic: Dress, Gender and Citizenship*, ed. Wendy Parkins (Oxford: Berg, 2002).

⁴⁹² Cohn, 'Cloth, Clothes and Colonialism,' in *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*; Tarlo, *Clothing Matters*; Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*; Bayly, 'Origins of Swadeshi,' especially 309-10; and Nandi Bhatia, 'Fashioning Women in Colonial India,' *Fashion Theory* 7, 3-4 (September 2003): 327-44. For similar themes in other sites of empire, see Hildi Hendrickson, *Clothing and Difference: Embodied Identities in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); and Carol Tulloch, "'Out of Many, One People": The Relativity of Dress, Race and Ethnicity to Jamaica, 1880-1907,' *Fashion Theory* 2, 4 (1998): 359-82.

⁴⁹³ Recent collections particularly underscore the relationship between fashion, dress, individuality and the construction of the modern self. See Rubinstein, *Dress Codes*, 11-12; William J. F. Keenan, ed., *Dressed to Impress: Looking the Part* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); and Christopher Breward and Caroline Evans, eds., *Fashion and Modernity* (Oxford: Berg, 2005). For an example of a focus on group identity, see Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Richard Bienvenu (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), especially 13.

⁴⁹⁴ For example, Christopher Breward, *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life 1860-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Fiona Anderson, 'Fashioning the Gentleman: A Study of Henry Poole and Co., Saville Row Tailors 1861-1900,' *Fashion Theory* 4, 4 (November

between Britain and India, family could play a significant role in producing, interpreting, and regulating dress and appearance. Dress was not only or simply about family, but these were spheres that overlapped in imagination and material experience in the everyday lives of Anglo-Indians. In their correspondence, dress operated as a vehicle through which they sought to explain Indian life to those in Britain as it could symbolise the specificities of environmental, racial, gendered and classed imperial experience. Family obligations and affections manifested as sartorial advice, or even as parcels of clothing acquired through gendered and generational configurations of production and consumption within the family. Finally, appearance could also be imagined in relation to the family in terms of similarity and difference, marking blood relationships visibly on the body, albeit sometimes fleetingly and tentatively. In these ways, family, dress and appearance became intimately interconnected, giving meaning to one another in relation to the specific contexts and concerns of Anglo-Indian correspondence.

British dress in India: wearing time and place

Anglo-Indian discussions of dress in India were positioned, either implicitly or explicitly, in relation to metropolitan ideas of fashion, which themselves were changing rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century. New technologies impacted both the import and the manufacture of textiles, in turn changing the possible forms, costs and materials of British dress.⁴⁹⁵ At the same time, the values, demands and rising wages of an expanding middle class fed a shifting consumer landscape increasingly focused on ready-made clothing and department-store shopping.⁴⁹⁶ Middle-class dress practices were especially shaped by a broadly shared

2000): especially 408; Erika Diane Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Katrina Honeyman, 'Following Suit: Men, Masculinity and Gendered Practices in the Clothing Trade in Leeds, England, 1890-1940,' *Gender and History* 14, 3 (November 2002): 426-46; Shannon, *The Cut of his Coat*; and Laura Ugolini, *Men and Menswear: Sartorial Consumption in Britain 1880-1939* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

⁴⁹⁵ Although my focus here is on the middle classes, this period brought some level of democratisation to dress in Britain. Elements like crinoline petticoats and bright prints became fashionable across the classes; the hoops were relatively inexpensive and printed cotton offered an affordable alternative to the silks preferred by wealthier individuals. Industrialisation facilitated domestic mass production of dress and textiles, which made ready-made clothing available in department stores and other markets, while sewing machines and paper patterns also helped a wider portion of the population to replicate elaborate dress and new fashions at home. See Penelope Byrde, *Nineteenth Century Fashion* (London: Batsford, 1992), 58, 132-33 and 137; and John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

⁴⁹⁶ Byrde, *Nineteenth Century Fashion*, 131; Christopher Beward, *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 147; Rappaport, *Shopping for*

ethos which suggested that outward appearance might indicate the ‘hidden character’ of people, making ‘material culture crucial in identity formation.’⁴⁹⁷

In general, British middle-class clothing saw ‘increasing elaboration’ and gender differentiation during this period.⁴⁹⁸ For women, skirts expanded under the support of new crinoline-hooped petticoats in the 1860s, then developed into dresses with long trains and elaborate bustles over the decades that followed. Lace, corsets, changing hat fashions and elaborate hairstyles also figured prominently in late-nineteenth-century women’s dress. By the very end of the century, the styles of the New Woman had begun a wider move toward more masculine forms including tailored jackets and collared shirts. Late-nineteenth-century women’s clothing was often ornate and brightly coloured, as new technologies like chemical aniline dyes (introduced in 1856) and sewing machines (in popular use by the 1860s) opened up new possibilities in textile and clothing production.⁴⁹⁹ For men, on the other hand, clothing became more streamlined during this period, as the shaping and cut of coats, trousers and suits became less exaggerated. Men’s clothing was typically darker and more subdued in colour, and over the final decades of the century new forms of informal dress such as the smoking jacket became popular. This period has typically been narrated as one of ‘the great masculine renunciation’ of fashion, but Christopher Breward and others have more recently argued that middle-class men continued to invest great care, time and attention in sartorial consumption and presentation.⁵⁰⁰ Children’s dress tended to echo adult fashions, although with looser shaping and a greater emphasis on comfort.⁵⁰¹ Overall, such middle-class expectations of dress followed strict codes of etiquette that shifted by context; the occasion, place or time of day could change the expected or appropriate style, material and colour of clothing.⁵⁰² Some of these guidelines went unspoken, depending on word-of-mouth and the modelling of appropriate behaviour to dictate

Pleasure; and Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and their Possessions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), x.

⁴⁹⁷ Clive Edwards, ‘Structure, Cladding and Detail: The Role of Textiles in the Associations between Identity, the Interior and Dress, 1860-1920,’ in *Fashion, Interior Design and the Contours of Modern Identity*, ed. Alla Myzelev and John Potvin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 67.

⁴⁹⁸ James Laver, *Costume and Fashion: A Concise History* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 177.

⁴⁹⁹ Byrde, *Nineteenth Century Fashion*, 130-31; and Laver, *Costume and Fashion*, 188.

⁵⁰⁰ This was John Flugel’s phrase. See Breward, *The Hidden Consumer*; and Christopher Breward, ‘Renouncing Consumption: Men, Fashion and Luxury, 1870-1914’, in de la Haye and Wilson, *Defining Dress*, 48-62.

⁵⁰¹ Byrde, *Nineteenth Century Fashion*, 21.

⁵⁰² Byrde, *Nineteenth Century Fashion*, 110.

deportment, but the growing popularity of etiquette manuals also gave rise to a more delineated definition of respectable dress and appearance.⁵⁰³

The expectations of Anglo-Indian dress behaviour also underwent significant changes during the nineteenth century, in part reflecting metropolitan developments and in part produced out of the Indian context. According to Emma Tarlo, 'early European travellers in India were... comparatively free to choose their own clothing styles, and often adapted or discarded their heavy European attire in quest of clothes more suitable to Indian customs and climate.'⁵⁰⁴ This early period of adaptation began to wane in the early nineteenth century as discourses on race and imperial rule increasingly prioritised distance and differentiation between Indians and Britons. As 'the boundaries delineating how far India and Indians might encroach upon the British body were defined,' Anglo-Indians increasingly turned to metropolitan styles of clothing to indicate and produce identities that were safely British.⁵⁰⁵ These changes were accompanied by official regulation. In 1830, the East India Company banned its British employees from wearing Indian dress at public functions. This kind of regulation of dress gained momentum after the Rebellion, bolstered by the increasing communication and connection with Britain, which enabled closer adherence to metropolitan fashions. By the 1860s, Sidney Blanchard could remark, 'now everybody dresses for dinner as they do in Europe,' especially as Anglo-Indian respectable masculinity became redefined and standardised in the form of black broadcloth suits like those of the metropolitan middle classes.⁵⁰⁶ This increasing concern for British standards was not only about defining oneself in India; as Tarlo argues, it was also in part about avoiding criticism from the metropole about the potential deterioration of body, mind, character and ethnicity.⁵⁰⁷ At the same time, however, Anglo-Indians did continue to adapt and adjust metropolitan dress for the social expectations and climatic requirements of the Indian context, producing localised expectations of dress that were not merely displaced metropolitan fashions.

⁵⁰³ These were, of course, only general trends that did not describe the details or styles of every middle-class family in metropolitan Britain. The Bloomer movement and the Aesthetic/Rational Dress movement were two key counter-movements that sought alternatives to restrictive, unhealthy and ornate clothing. See Laver, *Costume and Fashion*, 177-210; and Byrde, *Nineteenth Century Fashion*.

⁵⁰⁴ Tarlo, *Clothing Matters*, 35. Cohn, in contrast, emphasises Company employees' insistence on British dress. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 309.

⁵⁰⁵ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 50.

⁵⁰⁶ Sidney Blanchard, *Yesterday and Today in India* (1867), 27; in Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 61. See also Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 60-1 and 159-60; and Callaway, 'Dressing for Dinner in the Bush.'

⁵⁰⁷ Tarlo, *Clothing Matters*, 37.

In a context where dress was an increasingly important marker of identity, family discussions of clothing and the clothed body acted as a particularly central vehicle through which Anglo-Indians explained the changing rhythms, privileges and anxieties of their everyday lives. Dress—its production, consumption, styles and care—marked differences and similarities between Britain and India, between segments of the population within India, and between the earlier and later parts of the nineteenth century. When explaining these points, letter-writers framed dress both as a material and visual reminder of distance from Britain, and as an everyday enactment of embodied difference, power and position in the Raj. In these ways, epistolary discussions of dress facilitated the production of family forms of colonial knowledge about India, in relation both to the family and to Britain.

Even as metropolitan fashions were becoming more popular in India, letter-writers explained the ways in which British clothing, particularly its style or material, was found to be inappropriate to the Indian climate or unfashionable in Anglo-Indian society. Franklin Kendall, for example, reported soon after his arrival in Bombay, ‘I find everybody wears either patent leather or canvas shoes here. They say the ordinary English boots are no use except in the Monsoon and then they shrink up so that nobody can wear them.’⁵⁰⁸ Kendall also encountered different relationships between facial hair, masculinity, class and fashion, and he adjusted his appearance to fit the social norms of the Anglo-Indian governing class to which he aspired. He then explained the changes to his distant mother: ‘I have not shaved since I left, and my moustach is getting pretty well defined. Nobody seems to shave here, all the officers wear their beards.’⁵⁰⁹ Sometimes these differences were explained without much judgment, but other times they raised anxieties about respectability and morality in India. Expectations of British clothing standards and the realities of the Indian climate particularly came into conflict, with the health of women and children suffering from what Tarlo calls the ‘suffocating customs’ of wearing many layers of heavy clothing at public functions.⁵¹⁰ Intense debate was sparked by the

⁵⁰⁸ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 20 March 1858.

⁵⁰⁹ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, on board the *Ripon*, 22 February 1858. On the popularity of beards in mid-Victorian Britain, see Lurie, *The Language of Clothes*, 65–68.

⁵¹⁰ Tarlo, *Clothing Matters*, 38.

news that some Anglo-Indian women chose to abandon metropolitan expectations of underclothing and thick layers in the Indian heat.⁵¹¹

Letters offered a medium through which to define, articulate and explain these differences between metropolitan conventions and the practicalities of Anglo-Indian society. Writers particularly focused on the ways in which styles became dictated by the Indian climate in terms of both the temperature (the hot season, or cold temperatures in the north) and the damp (the monsoon season). Although climate permeated most aspects of family letters between Britain and India, clothing was an especially potent and anxious element of these discussions because it was seen to offer protection from temperature and tropical disease if designed and worn properly. However, heat and moisture could also seep through dress uncomfortably or dangerously.⁵¹² In a graphic letter about the impact of monsoons on every part of his Indian life, Kendall described how ‘so intensely moist, (damp hardly expresses the feeling)’ everything became, with ‘the moisture creeping in everywhere.’ Clothing, boots and even his toothbrush were mouldy each morning.⁵¹³ In this kind of situation, letter-writers framed the relationship between climate, disease, body and dress as much less protective, as disease was described as penetrating or even experienced through clothing. Some correspondence offered particularly vivid descriptions of prickly heat that put the body—and bodily sensations—at the heart of daily experiences.⁵¹⁴ According to these letters, prickly heat was not just a bodily affliction; it also pointed up the sometimes tense, sensed relationship between Anglo-Indian bodies and clothing, with Pollie Keen writing that it made them feel ‘it is as if the clothes we have on were full of splints.’⁵¹⁵

Anglo-Indian understandings of climate and health also shaped dress behaviour in other ways. Letters about clothing illustrated how the seasons were marked by shifts in dress behaviour. Some of these changes seem obvious, natural and common sense for both India and Britain, as individuals sought to wear clothing

⁵¹¹ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 62.

⁵¹² Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 87-91 and 172; and Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 149 and 152-57.

⁵¹³ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 26 June 1858.

⁵¹⁴ Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 6-8 May 1858; BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to sister and brother, Sialkot, [n.d., letter 35]; and Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 6 July 1891.

⁵¹⁵ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 1 August 1891.

that suited the temperature as it changed throughout the year.⁵¹⁶ During the rainy season, for example, Kendall explained that ‘everyone puts on flannel and thick clothes.’⁵¹⁷ These practices were described not only as a changing look, but also as a changing feeling that interwove dress, the body and the environment. To this end, Kendall reported home in late June 1858:

The last day or two I have changed my thin black alpaca trousers for the thick dark ones I was wearing last winter at home, and have not felt too hot. I have also had drawers on, which I did not wear before. How damp everything feels and is, to be sure, pyjamas and nightshirt feel quite moist when one puts them on in the evening, and other clothes ditto in the morning.⁵¹⁸

Climatic changes in clothing were not always simply a matter of individual common sense. Seasonal dress behaviour was also a ritualised action that marked visually both the time of year and more significantly, the wearer’s membership in respectable Anglo-Indian society. During the summer, Anglo-Indians wore white clothing. Pollie Keen’s letters to her mother and sisters in England underscore that this was a coordinated act, with the whole community switching to white on the same day. For Keen, white clothing was a visual symbol of cleanliness, style, pride and quality of character.⁵¹⁹ Its central place in her letters each year situated dress as an important marker of time, rhythms of life and identity in the Indian context, a sign that would be mutually understood and similarly assigned importance by others in the Anglo-Indian community.⁵²⁰ Alison Lurie argues that these values were held more generally among Anglo-Indians, adding that ‘the British insistence upon the spotlessness and freedom from wrinkles of these garments also made them a portable sign of status, and symbolically transformed military occupation and

⁵¹⁶ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 9 August 1891.

⁵¹⁷ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 26 June 1858.

⁵¹⁸ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 26 June 1858.

⁵¹⁹ For example, BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to sister and brother, Sialkot, [n.d., letter 35]; BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 9 April 1890; BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 14 April 1890; BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to sister Fanny, Sialkot, 14 April 1890; and BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 10 April 1891 and 21 April 1891.

⁵²⁰ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 66.

commercial exploitation into justice and virtue, even into self-sacrifice.⁵²¹ There is no indication, however, that Keen's family in England was particularly interested in this practice or that they assigned it the same kind of meanings and significance. Keen's insistent and repeated descriptions seem instead to highlight a divergence in familiar patterns of dress wrought by the specific combination of the Indian climate and Anglo-Indian social customs.

Within the wider Anglo-Indian community, smaller groups developed their own expectations of dress based on their specific needs, societal norms and rhythms of life. Military men, for example, had different expectations and experiences of dress from other Anglo-Indians. In part, this was related to the symbolic power of the uniform and medals, which visually defined the boundaries and membership of the group, as well as communicating about rank in a hierarchy within the community itself.⁵²² While on the march, military communities also developed homosocial codes of unofficial dress, which could then be disrupted by the arrival of wives or others who were not deemed to belong. In one such example, Beynon celebrated the freedoms in his community of men as symbolised by their clothing routines. Since two of his men were shortly expected to bring wives to the camp, he feared that sartorial changes, and the accompanying social pressures of heterosocial interaction, were inevitable:

I think on the whole it is a nuisance having women up in the wilds like this... we have so far got on very comfortably... You didn't want any but comfortable old clothes [without women]... I suppose now we shall have to use... shirts and collars instead of grey flannel, & store clothes instead of shooting coats.⁵²³

Overall, such letters sought to communicate and explain patterns of life that reflected codes of class, gender, race and status as they manifested in British communities in India. In the process, they framed dress as a powerful symbol for, and performance of, these wider patterns of everyday life in Anglo-Indian society.

⁵²¹ Lurie, *The Language of Clothes*, 187. For one example of the insistence on cleanliness, see BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 20 July 1891.

⁵²² Lurie, *The Language of Clothes*, 19. BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 4 January 1891; BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Simla, 16 September 1896; and BL, Mss Eur D830/24, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Camp Mamani, 24 January 1898.

⁵²³ BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Gilgit, 12 August 1895.

Family letters did not produce and transmit knowledge about these aspects of Anglo-Indian life in a vacuum. Rather, these descriptions were always inflected with the anticipated or expressed expectations of metropolitan relatives. In this way, they also reflected and shaped forms of family relationships at a distance. In many cases, letter-writers in Britain responded to Anglo-Indian descriptions of dress by offering advice on respectable, practical and healthy clothing for their distant relatives. In so doing, they framed Anglo-Indian dress choices as influencing family identities, reputations and relationships even across imperial space. For example, when Margaret Percy complained to her daughter-in-law, Ellen Grant, about her other daughter-in-law's unbecoming dress practices, she added, 'I hope... you will always take care to wear the right thing.'⁵²⁴ Throughout the rest of her correspondence with Grant, Percy repeatedly emphasised the importance of respectable dress and deportment for her family's reputation. In the process, she entrenched her own position as matriarch and regulator of family honour, and indicated that dress was still a concern of family even at a distance.

While this attempted regulation of dress was frequently dispensed without being requested, men in India sometimes turned to female relatives in Britain for help with shaping an appropriate wardrobe. In 1859, Kendall wrote to his mother a long and impassioned letter asking for her feedback on an outfit that he had chosen to wear to his friend's wedding the previous week. He had put together an ensemble that might best be described as 'exuberantly colored and sensuously fashioned.'⁵²⁵ It consisted of 'a tremendous pair of shepherds plaid pegtops... lavender kid gloves... my old blue frock coat... a swell white waistcoat, and Mr. Maul's blue and gold tie... [and] gold wriststuds.' Kendall concluded, 'I think I did very well,' especially compared to the other men who had chosen more subdued colours, textures and styles: 'I don't think I ever saw any set of gentlemen at a wedding so badly dressed. Nearly everyone wore black trousers.' His detailed description then turned to the question of respectability, as he situated his mother as a trusted advisor on the question of dress, even with respect to changing fashions and cultures of appropriate masculine dress in Anglo-Indian society:

⁵²⁴ BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady Josceline Percy (Margaret Grant) to daughter-in-law Ellen Grant, London, 2 March 1876. See also BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady Josceline Percy (Margaret Grant) to son Charles Grant, London, 10 February 1867.

⁵²⁵ Anderson, 'Fashioning the Gentleman,' 414.

Mrs. Townsend thinks that everybody ought to have been dressed in black except white waistcoats, do you? I believe it was rather the Bride's taste too, two of her brothers were dressed so, and so were most of the other people. Mrs. Matthey paid me the compliment of saying that she thought I was dressed more the gentleman than almost anybody there, but Mrs. Townsend did not think so, what do you say? You know all the clothes I had except the trousers, and they were an ordinary small check shepherds plaid.⁵²⁶

Kendall's letter indicates a growing conformity among men's formal dress in Anglo-Indian society, but also suggests the possibility for individual expression. At the same time, by asking his mother for advice, Kendall framed the issue as one of family. From one perspective, then, relatives—especially female ones—might be able to use the post to maintain and adapt certain familial obligations by dispensing sartorial advice that crossed vast distances.

However, this advice could also highlight wide gaps in understanding about the practicalities and demands of Anglo-Indian life in terms of both social expectations and the environment. When Pollie Keen's mother suggested that she dry frocks over a fire during a particularly heavy monsoon season in Sialkot in 1891, for example, Pollie responded, 'Your suggestion... made us shout. Dick says *My Golly*, Mother ought to be here a little while[.] She would not want a fire.'⁵²⁷ For George White, the divergence between Anglo-Indian and British understandings of dress practices was best handled through exasperated exaggeration. When his sister appeared not to understand the impact of Indian heat on his daily life, he responded by describing the environment in which, he claimed, 'the soles of your boots blister... a tall man cant go out in day time without a wet sponge on his head for fear of having his hair singed... [and] the gold stuffing of your teeth runs about your mouth like water & never settles down till the cold weather.'⁵²⁸

While many letters of family advice highlighted diverging lives and expectations of dress, some cases of transcolonial sartorial advice did help to produce specialist knowledge about Anglo-Indian life and society, which circulated along family networks and helped to shape the appearance of relatives. By the latter decades of the nineteenth century, prospective Anglo-Indians could be introduced to

⁵²⁶ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 7 February 1859.

⁵²⁷ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 1 August 1891.

⁵²⁸ BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Jullundur, 18 August 1869.

the expectations of dress by a proliferation of advice literature. Books such as Mrs. Lyttelton's 1892 *How to Pack, How to Dress, How to Keep Well on a Winter Tour of India (for Ladies)* provided outlines and inventories of clothing that would be appropriate to hotter climates en route to and in India, as well as styles that were considered respectable within the Anglo-Indian community.⁵²⁹ However, letters from relatives with experience in India were also valuable sources of up-to-date and practical information for individuals developing their kits, as they were able to transmit trusted information about what was considered appropriate, respectable and proper Anglo-Indian dress.⁵³⁰ When Herbert Sconce advised his nephew on what to bring to India for different kinds of positions, his letters suggested that he was able to offer his family help that the published guides could not. He even listed the items usually recommended, and explained which were needed and which he had found unnecessary in his own experience.⁵³¹ For potential newcomers, this kind of information not only helped them to save costs and luggage space, but also formed a critical part of their 'socialization to the codes of conduct expected of pakka sahibs and memsahibs.'⁵³² In so doing, this exchange of information worked as a way of building community among Anglo-Indians, with insider knowledge and specialist advice helping to define who belonged—or who would be able to belong in future. Passed on through familial and personal connections, this process worked to exclude as well as include, drawing barriers between the Anglo-Indian community and others: poor whites, Indians and Britons without Indian experience.

Indian dress and British bodies

Epistolary discussions of dress were not simply focused on the ways in which metropolitan styles were adapted or reworked according to Indian climates and social codes. In their private writing as well as in official policies, Anglo-Indians were also

⁵²⁹ Katharine Sarah Lyttelton, *How to Pack, How to Dress, How to Keep Well on a Winter Tour of India (For Ladies)* (London: E. Stanford, 1892). The clothing recommended by such guides indicated the primary importance of dress in presenting, performing and claiming membership in a classed and racialised society modelled on British high society, but reshaped for the Indian context. For example, the 1861 *Popular Overland Guide* included a packing list for a 'properly equipped lady' that included six pairs of best kid gloves, six muslin morning dresses, four evening dresses, four fancy silk dresses, two ball gowns, and one opera cloak. Men were encouraged to bring a tweed suit, a dress suit, a frock coat, two fancy trousers, five jackets and an Indian umbrella among other items. See excerpts in BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, annotations to Franklin Kendall's letters, letter 2, p. 272.

⁵³⁰ Callaway, 'Dressing for Dinner in the Bush,' 243.

⁵³¹ BL, Mss Eur C492, Captain Herbert Sconce, Herbert Sconce to sister Sally Bunbury, North Cachar, 17 February 1859.

⁵³² Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 150.

concerned with Indian dress.⁵³³ By the mid-nineteenth century, difference, race and inferiority were increasingly being seen as marked visibly onto Indian bodies. The classification and regulation of dress and appearance thus played a central role in this process by distinguishing between British and Indian bodies, and by identifying categories, castes and religions within the latter.⁵³⁴ Epistolary representations of Indian dress depended on a longer history of British imaginings of India and Indians, both within and outside the family. The proliferation and spread of exoticised images of over-adorned Indians, for example, meant that Margaret Percy could marvel at her own imaginings of gaudy Indian dress when writing to her daughter-in-law, Ellen Grant: 'What a fine sight it must be, to see all these Indian Princes covered with jewels, & escorted by followers almost with their weight in gold... It must remind people, of the stories in the Arabian Nights.'⁵³⁵ Such extravagant images were less commonly produced in correspondence from India during this period, although letter-writers did occasionally send detailed descriptions of native clothing and appearance, particularly after their first arrival in India and during special holidays. Pollie Keen reported numerous times on 'native Christmas' celebrations that took place in Sialkot throughout the spring and summer months. Each time, her detailed descriptions were primarily occupied with dress, especially the colours of different outfits that she identified as being new and special for the occasion. In this way, Keen positioned dress as a principal point of difference and curiosity.⁵³⁶ Other letter-writers sent detailed ethnographic descriptions of different forms of Indian everyday dress and even included sketches.⁵³⁷ These contributed to a wider process of knowledge production that was intimately tied with the operation and justification of imperial rule in India. At the same time, this process was firmly grounded in the family correspondence through which it was articulated and by which it penetrated

⁵³³ Tarlo, *Clothing Matters*, 33-42.

⁵³⁴ Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 129-30; Tarlo, *Clothing Matters*; and Bhatia, 'Fashioning Women in Colonial India.' For one archival example, see BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 6-8 May 1858.

⁵³⁵ BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady Josceline Percy (Margaret Grant) to daughter-in-law Ellen Grant, London, 3 January 1876.

⁵³⁶ BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 9 March 1890 and 4 August 1890; and BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 9 August 1891 and 16 August 1891.

⁵³⁷ Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 20 March 1858; BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 6-8 May 1858; BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 26 June 1858; and Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 24 April 1890.

metropolitan imaginings of India; while middle-class Britons at home might have been exposed to representations of Indians through newspapers, political debates or novels, personal connections were a widely accessible and significant route by which this kind of knowledge about India was transmitted to the metropole.

Sometimes the divide between Indian and British dress was not as sharp as letter-writers usually liked to imply. Letters about 'native' dress occasionally pointed out one of the privileges or options available to respectable Anglo-Indians: wearing Indian clothes in certain, limited contexts. Although historians generally agree that the period of adaptation and incorporation of Indian clothing had ended by the second half of the nineteenth century, family correspondence indicates that indigenous dress had not been entirely regulated out of their daily or public lives.⁵³⁸ In addition to the partial incorporation of Indian materials and styles into Anglo-Indian dress, Britons occasionally donned Indian clothing and passed as Indian for specific purposes.⁵³⁹ By doing so, Anglo-Indians inscribed these clothing items with a range of new meanings that could represent solidarity or domination, colonial resistance or imperial authority.⁵⁴⁰ This practice did not always enter a family correspondence, but when it did, it was framed as an evocative—if also slippery and dangerous—assertion of power and identity in the Indian context.

In an 1858 letter to his mother, written in the midst of anxieties about the Rebellion, Franklin Kendall narrated the story of an Anglo-Indian police inspector who 'dressed himself in a native's clothes' and infiltrated a meeting of Indians, overhearing their plans to 'murder all the Europeans.' The inspector successfully arrested the instigators the next morning.⁵⁴¹ Such use of disguise for police surveillance work was sometimes viewed with suspicion in Britain and India in the mid-nineteenth century, although these discourses did begin to shift during the second half of the century. This was perhaps particularly true in India, where the Rebellion had demonstrated the vulnerability of British intelligence and control. The question of disguise linked surveillance, knowledge, rule and safety with dress and

⁵³⁸ For example, Callaway, 'Dressing for Dinner in the Bush'; Tarlo, *Clothing Matters*, 37; and Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 60-1 and 159-60.

⁵³⁹ On the incorporation of Indian styles, especially pyjamas, and private 'lounging' dress, see Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 66.

⁵⁴⁰ For studies of multiple, contested or alternative meanings for dress, see Lurie, *The Language of Clothes*, 24; Crane, 'Clothing Behavior as Non-Verbal Resistance,' 261; Michael Sturma, 'Mimicry, Mockery and Make-overs: Western Visitors in South Pacific Dress,' *Fashion Theory* 4, 2 (2000): 141-55; and Bhatia, 'Fashioning Women in Colonial India.'

⁵⁴¹ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 26 June 1858.

appearance. In this story, and in similar ones, clothing was clearly assigned importance in visually identifying race and group membership—but in ways that could constitute misinformation as much as information. Moreover, this strategic use of clothing indicated a tense relationship between imperial knowledge, power and identity. The police inspector's capacity to disguise himself successfully suggested British officials' use of knowledge to master and administer Indian society. However, this implied simultaneously their power and the potential dangers of enacting this power. The inspector's respectable, white identity still relied on his eventual return to British dress and Anglo-Indian society; the use of disguise in surveillance represented an uncomfortable possibility of slipping into Indianness if taken on too realistically or for too long.⁵⁴²

Not all instances of sartorial 'passing' were aimed directly at deceiving Indians in order to facilitate rule. In 1897, Beynon explained to his father his regiment's plans for an exercise in the field, with his group representing 'a hostile force coming from Nepal' and another group under an officer named West 'com[ing] out and attack[ing] us.' He noted, 'My party is in native dress, West's in uniform' so as to 'make blue business as realistic as possible.'⁵⁴³ Although his letter indicated another example of Britons wearing native clothing as part of their imperial work, in this case Beynon's party was not intending to pass realistically among Indians. Rather, their use of dress was in part practical—so that the two 'parties' knew who was on which side of the staged battle—and in part symbolic. The power of dress and appearance to indicate sides, and more importantly the power of the British army to wear native dress in manoeuvres without ultimately damaging their claims to Britishness, indicated one of the privileges of military whiteness in India. At the same time, the practice of impersonating Indian combatants required similar forms of knowledge as police disguise; in order to lead his men realistically, and thus to prepare them adequately for future battles, Beynon had to understand the

⁵⁴² See C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Michael Silvestri, 'The Thrill of "Simply Dressing Up": The Indian Police, Disguise, and Intelligence Work in Colonial India,' *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 2, 21 (2001).

⁵⁴³ BL, Mss Eur D83/24, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to father William Beynon, Almora, 16 May 1897.

conventions, expectations and practices of the people whom he was imitating, at least to an extent.⁵⁴⁴

Other examples of Britons wearing Indian dress suggest that this was not only a practice aimed at aiding or symbolising imperial rule. As Helen Callaway argues, ‘As a visual code, modes of dress carried multivalent meanings within the wider cultural system of imperial authority and privilege.’⁵⁴⁵ Some Anglo-Indian women reported wearing native clothing to aid their movements in areas where white women were restricted.⁵⁴⁶ By temporarily wearing Indian dress, they could thus manipulate intersections of privilege, gender, race, mobility and space. In another example of the private use of Indian dress, George White promised to send his family a copy of the portrait that he had taken in Dalhousie while wearing ‘full shikari costume.’⁵⁴⁷ Overall, whether in the act of imperial work, or on special (limited) occasions like a portrait, respectable white Britons might safely wear Indian clothing, and indeed their racialised, gendered and classed positions in society were precisely the elements that enabled them to do so without much danger or comment. In these cases, it could become a symbol of imperial power, a curiosity or a marker of Anglo-Indian status rather than an indicator of slippage into Indianness. However, there was always the very real danger of such slippage. Particularly for lower-class white or mixed-race families, or in cases of more permanent or less sanctioned ‘cross-dressing’ behaviour, publicly donning Indian dress could signify such an irrevocable slide.⁵⁴⁸ As long as it was mentioned as a novelty in letters, though, distant relatives could be assured that respectable and familiar practices remained the norm.

Gifts, exchange and the family circulation of clothing

Family epistolary discussions of Anglo-Indian clothing were not the only path by which knowledge, values, identities and relationships were produced and explained through dress across imperial distances. By the late nineteenth century, British and Indian sartorial histories had been deeply entwined for two centuries through wider patterns of textile production, trade, exchange and consumption. In the late seventeenth century, the East India Company had begun to import Indian

⁵⁴⁴ British military uniforms in late-nineteenth-century India were also influenced by Indian dress. See Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 123-25.

⁵⁴⁵ Callaway, ‘Dressing for Dinner in the Bush,’ 244.

⁵⁴⁶ Callaway, ‘Dressing for Dinner in the Bush,’ 244-46.

⁵⁴⁷ BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Sanch Pangi, 15 May 1869.

⁵⁴⁸ Tarlo, *Clothing Matters*, 36.

textiles, especially cottons, chintzes and calicoes, to Britain. These products rapidly became popular, in part because the brightly printed cottons offered a cheaper alternative to aristocratic silks and did not fade with washing.⁵⁴⁹ Along with other Asian material goods, Indian textiles became part of a changing consumer aesthetic in Britain.⁵⁵⁰ Indeed, these materials were in such high demand that the government was pushed to ban their import in 1721 in order to protect and develop domestic industry. Over the next century, the English cotton industry grew dramatically, but did so by incorporating the designs and techniques of the Indian materials that had preceded it. By 1820, the first English yarns began to be imported to India, beginning a reversal of earlier trade patterns.⁵⁵¹ Through the rest of the nineteenth century, Indian textile production declined, in part because of the import and spread of these British products.⁵⁵²

Although the vast majority of the existing historiography on the material exchange of dress materials focuses on this kind of commercial exchange between Britain and India, clothing—anything from boots to bonnets—also moved across imperial distances in the personal postal connections of British families.⁵⁵³ This process was enabled, facilitated and sustained by correspondence, in which relatives dictated and explained the contents of parcels. It is uncertain whether or how much gifts of clothing were worn or appreciated, or impacted the dress behaviour of

⁵⁴⁹ Styles, *Dress of the People*, 109-112. For more on the Anglo-Indian trade of textiles, see Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, 125-26; Beverly Lemire, 'Domesticating the Exotic: Floral Culture and the East India Calico Trade with England, c. 1600-1800,' *Textile: The Journal of Cloth and Culture* 1, 1 (March 2003): 64-85; Beverly Lemire, 'Fashioning Cottons: Asian Trade, Domestic Industry and Consumer Demand 1660-1780,' in *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, vol. 2, ed. David Jenkins (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003), 493-512; Maxine Berg, 'In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century,' *Past and Present* 182, 1 (2004): 85-142; Robert C. Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Beverly Lemire, 'Revising the Historical Narrative: India, Europe and the Cotton Trade, c. 1300-1800,' in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1300-1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 205-22; Giorgio Riello, 'The Globalization of Cotton Textiles: Indian Cottons, Europe and the Atlantic World, 1600-1850,' in Riello and Parthasarathi, *Spinning World*, 261-87; Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy, ed., *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500-1850* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); and Tirthankar Roy, 'The Long Globalization and Textile Producers in India,' in *The Ashgate Companion to the History of Textile Workers, 1650-2000*, ed. Lex Heerma van Voss, Els Hiemstra-Kuperus and Elise van Nedeerveen Meerkerk (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 253-74.

⁵⁵⁰ See Beverly Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁵⁵¹ Roy, 'Long Globalization,' 258.

⁵⁵² Roy, 'Long Globalization,' 259; and Bayly, 'The Origins of Swadeshi.' On Indian textile production, see also Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 143 and on.

⁵⁵³ For one study that does look at this issue, though for an earlier period, see Margot Finn, 'Colonial Gifts: Family Politics and the Exchange of Goods in British India, c. 1780-1820,' *Modern Asian Studies* 40, 1 (February 2006): 203-31.

relatives on either side of the communication. However, the exchange itself allowed for particular clothing items to act as ‘portable property’ that might ‘stor[e] personal or familial memories’; to symbolise particular kinds of family relationships at a distance; or to represent physical manifestations of affective and obligatory ties that ‘act[ed] to unite family members separated by oceans and continents.’⁵⁵⁴ In other words, the material exchange of clothing in the post further linked Britain and India in family knowledge, affection, obligation and imagination, in the process helping to shape both family relationships and Anglo-Indian identities between Britain and India in a range of ways.

Some clothing parcels travelled from India to Britain. These were generally not intended to fill the immediate wardrobe needs of metropolitan family members, but rather were intended as gifts, usually for female relatives. Most were Indian shawls or scarves, or sometimes accessories like umbrellas.⁵⁵⁵ Transcolonial gifts of Indian dress could act as material signs of affection and connection that linked distant relatives in very tactile and visual ways. At the same time, accompanying letters tended to frame these gifts as curiosities, material reminders of the exotic context in which the sender lived and worked. Although the use of Indian dress was increasingly discouraged in India itself, these items were deemed ‘safe’ for distant relatives; whether they were worn or simply displayed, they would not be understood as representing degeneration or passing in the metropole, and thus they could be appropriate gifts to family. In the process, gifts of Indian clothing participated in a wider pattern of the incorporation and display of Asian goods in the lives of the British branches of Anglo-Indian families.

Other gifts of dress explicitly aided family formation and the cementing of new family ties across imperial distances. In early 1883, William Hartt sent a bracelet to his future sister-in-law, Fanny Buck, while her sister Emily was on her way to Bombay to marry him. The previous month, Hartt had written Buck a letter, addressing her by her first name and telling her, ‘I hope you will not be offended with the familiarity, but I have all along looked upon you as a sister, & am going to

⁵⁵⁴ Plotz, *Portable Property*, 17; and Finn, ‘Colonial Gifts,’ 204.

⁵⁵⁵ For example, BL, Mss Eur F142/61, George Abercrombie Robinson, Jardy Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, Cawnpore, 4 May 1857; BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 26 June 1858; and BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 16 February 1890. See also Finn, ‘Colonial Gifts,’ 222.

treat you accordingly.⁵⁵⁶ In this letter, Hartt had tried to address Buck's concerns about her sister's upcoming marriage to him, arguing that he would be a suitable husband for Emily. The letter that accompanied the bracelet, however, was more formal, addressed to 'Miss Buck.' It is unclear whether Hartt had been directly rebuked for his familiarity in the previous letter, but here he seems to have turned to other forms of evoking or claiming new family ties. As he wrote, 'I hope you will accept [the gift] because if Emily & I could have been married in England you would have been one of her bridesmaids. I do not know whether it is the best thing I could have selected but Emily seems to have been very pleased with a bracelet that one of her friends gave her & it struck me you might like one too.'⁵⁵⁷ In this way, the bracelet might have represented an affective tie, worn close to the body, that linked Fanny with her sister and her new brother-in-law. These were relationships stretched across new distances, and Hartt may have hoped that a material bond, explained through text, would help to cement the process.⁵⁵⁸

Most clothing parcels travelled in the other direction, however, with relatives—usually mothers or sisters—in Britain sending either homemade or purchased items to those in India. Indeed, Anglo-Indian wardrobes seem to have relied heavily on goods sent by British family members. This process enabled relatives to perform or adapt some elements of gendered familial relationships across imperial distances, and in relation to the specificities of British and Indian contexts. At the same time, they required and produced a detailed understanding of postal systems, Anglo-Indian social seasons and expectations, the Indian climate, the nature of textiles and markets in both places, and the changing bodies of distant relatives.

Relatives on both sides of a correspondence expected clothing parcels to be sent from Britain. In accompanying letters, they framed this as simply part of a family relationship that spanned imperial distances, a way in which they could demonstrate continuing affections and new forms of familial duties. Most parcels contained clothing that had been requested by those in India, often according to specific instructions about size, style or even place of purchase. Anglo-Indians explained what clothing items they found useful, appropriate or in fashion for their

⁵⁵⁶ BL, F270/1, William Edward Hartt, William Hartt to future sister-in-law Fanny Buck, [?], 3 January 1883.

⁵⁵⁷ BL, F270/1, William Edward Hartt, William Hartt to future sister-in-law Fanny Buck, [n.p.] 1 February 1883.

⁵⁵⁸ For a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between gifts and family formation, see Finn, 'Colonial Gifts.'

positions in India, and requested that particular types be sent to supplement their wardrobes. In May 1858, for example, Franklin Kendall wrote to his mother for Glenny's underwaistcoats, which he explained were 'without doubt the best to be had for India.'⁵⁵⁹ Children's clothes were requested frequently since their growing bodies demanded new sizes regularly. Because parcels could take months to arrive, Anglo-Indian mothers often asked that their relatives send items that were several sizes too large so that they would last longer.⁵⁶⁰ When such requests were not forthcoming, those in Britain asked what items were needed or unavailable in Indian markets.⁵⁶¹ This kind of epistolary exchange was another opportunity for Anglo-Indians to explain aspects of their everyday lives. Even for those from families with a long history in India, changing styles, societal expectations and available markets meant that new instructions were needed in order to acquire the 'proper' clothing from Britain.

Many of the epistolary requests for dress parcels provided detailed information about the timing and expectations of Anglo-Indian social seasons. In June 1874, Alick Bruce sent instructions for a parcel of clothing that he wanted his sister Jane to send that autumn. He hoped that she would have enough time to acquire the items necessary to maintain the Bruce family's social suitability for the cold season's entertainment:

I must get you to send out another Box in September—but the Dresses should reach us early in November as our cold season begins then[.] Autumn dresses, and hats for *both* Lizzys... or whatever is worn, and evening gloves *No* 7. nice neck ties &c. In sending out Dresses in future—see that ample material & trimming are sent out for the Bodices. Liz would [like?] a day Dress Colour Billiard Cloth *Green*... Liz thinks you had better send her out 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ gloves especially white ones—they all stretch much out here... send it out as a *Parcel*. They come very cheap.⁵⁶²

Bruce's specification of 'whatever is worn' underscores that requests were not always about explaining what was important for Indian climates or the practicalities of everyday life. Rather, closer communication and transportation connections with

⁵⁵⁹ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 6–8 May 1858. See also BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 26 June 1858.

⁵⁶⁰ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 12 January 1891 and [n.d., approximately February 1891].

⁵⁶¹ For example, BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Simla, 3 August 1896.

⁵⁶² BL, Mss Eur F455/1, Lt.-Col. Alexander Hervey Blackwood Bruce, Alick Bruce to sister Jane Alexander, Mussoorie, 7 June 1874.

Britain meant that Anglo-Indian consumer desires could be shaped by the priorities, values and styles of metropolitan fashions.

Anglo-Indians justified such clothing requests because of the high prices, unavailability and poor quality of similar products in India.⁵⁶³ Although British clothing was becoming increasingly available and affordable in India, particularly in urban areas, Emily Hartt still felt in 1883 that 'all European goods are an awful price.'⁵⁶⁴ Hartt explained that the available clothing was so expensive because even unbleached calico was being imported from Manchester.⁵⁶⁵ By the end of the century, in contrast, Pollie Keen found that some clothing goods were cheaper to acquire in India. In one instance, she reported to her mother, 'we seem to be able to get most things out here pretty cheap for wear and hand made under [wear?] very much cheaper than at home.'⁵⁶⁶ However, this could vary by region and clothing item, and Keen found that other items were much more difficult or expensive to acquire in her husband's Sialkot station:

Children's straw hats are rather dear and we have quite a job to get them boots. I suppose if we were in a larger place like Calcutta it would not be so much trouble. I should have to pay about 10 or 12 shillings for a pair of English made boots or shoes for me that we could get at home for 6 but a pair of country made ones I could get for about 2s. 8d.⁵⁶⁷

While clothing requests helped to produce some level of familiarity with postal systems, Indian markets and Anglo-Indian dress behaviour among British relatives, they also participated in the maintenance and reworking of gendered family relationships across imperial space. Some of the clothing items sent from Britain were sewn by mothers and sisters. In this sense, sartorial exchange continued gendered expectations of clothing production within the family, which defined most

⁵⁶³ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 26 June 1858.

⁵⁶⁴ BL, Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, Emily Hartt to sister Fanny Buck, Delhi, 24 February 1883.

⁵⁶⁵ BL, Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, Emily Hartt to sister Fanny Buck, Tirhoot, 15 May 1883.

⁵⁶⁶ BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 9 February 1890.

⁵⁶⁷ BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 9 February 1890. See also BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 9 August 1891 and 1 December 1891.

sewing and knitting tasks as women's work, even apparently at a distance.⁵⁶⁸ For those who produced clothing for distant relatives, the process involved very material, visual and tactile reminders of the ways in which the shapes, sizes and needs of familiar bodies had changed in India. The physical experience of touching and shaping clothing that would be in intimate contact with distant loved ones could act—though did not necessarily do so—as a particularly potent point of connection between separated family members.⁵⁶⁹

While some female relatives continued to sew items for distant brothers or sons, Anglo-Indian clothing was also purchased from tailors and shops in Britain. While the rise of the department store and late-nineteenth-century forms of consumerism linked shopping, fashion and femininity in public imaginings, the work of clothing acquisition was not so simply gendered in the Victorian family.⁵⁷⁰ Fiona Anderson has demonstrated, for example, that upper-class men were often responsible for procuring their own clothing from bespoke tailors in London during this period.⁵⁷¹ Men of the governing classes in India, however, at least sometimes rejected the services of Indian tailors and sent for clothing from familiar metropolitan businesses, asking female relatives to arrange for their production and purchase. In this sense, the family economy of clothing production and acquisition could change with separation, as relatives continued, adapted or took on new responsibilities for acquiring dress items.

Finally, clothing parcels did not only contain newly made or newly purchased items. Pollie Keen's sisters occasionally sent old clothing of their own so that she could use the materials to make something useful or appropriate for her life in India. In 1891, for example, Fanny sent a 'rose coloured ball dress... and some nice grey nuns veiling,' which Pollie intended to use to 'make the girls some pretty dresses.'⁵⁷² She later reported that she had instead made a 'nice little jacket' with 'enough left to

⁵⁶⁸ BL, Mss Eur C176/151, Henry Beveridge, Phemie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, London, 23 November 1857; and BL, Mss Eur C176/152, Henry Beveridge, Allie Beveridge to mother Jemima Beveridge, [?], 18 July 1870.

⁵⁶⁹ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 9 August 1891.

⁵⁷⁰ For example, Loeb, *Consuming Angels*; and Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*.

⁵⁷¹ Anderson, 'Fashioning the Gentleman.'

⁵⁷² BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 29 June 1891.

reline my Dolman.⁵⁷³ This type of exchange might have also happened had the sisters lived in closer proximity, although it may have been especially encouraged by Pollie's constant concerns about family finances given her husband's alcoholism.⁵⁷⁴ In any case, personal dress items could have represented particularly emotional ties across distances, as material signs of distant loved ones that were remade into new forms and worn on a regular basis.

Whether sewn, purchased or second-hand, the clothing sent between Britain and India ran parallel to routes that commercial textiles had travelled for centuries. However, these exchanges represented a different kind of connection between the two sites, one that was grounded in and productive of the affective ties and shifting obligations of separated family relationships. The nature of these links were grounded in the specificities of both India and the metropole—their needs, values, fashions, systems of production and contexts for consumption. Especially in the parcels of clothing sent from Britain, the materiality of the contents offered individuals tactile connections to the bodies of distant relatives, even as the specific dress choices may have highlighted diverging needs, desires and interests within the separated family. At the same time, interpretations of clothing industries, markets and forms of family respectability shaped the choice and movement of clothing in both directions. Through these exchanges, the visual display of particular forms of Anglo-Indian identities came to rely in part on goods from Britain, as dress items might be given status as 'blighty make.'⁵⁷⁵ Meanwhile, British families acquired new possibilities for Oriental display and associated forms of imperial family status through Anglo-Indian gifts of scarves and shawls. In these ways, the passage of clothing worked to link Britain and India in family experiences and understandings of imperial places, and in imperial experiences and understandings of family.

The family likeness: bodily connection, recognition and belonging

Many British families engaged with the Raj established multi-generational patterns of movement between Britain and India. Long-term family histories of involvement with the East India Company, the Indian Civil Service and the military

⁵⁷³ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, [n.d., letter 6]. See also Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 16 March 1890.

⁵⁷⁴ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 11 May 1891.

⁵⁷⁵ BL, Mss Eur F528/9, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 9 February 1890.

meant that some new arrivals in India found themselves already recognised and legitimised by colleagues and communities as belonging, as having a history and a sense of place that extended beyond the individual's own limited experience there. While there were many ways by which this process occurred, physical appearance—and particularly perceived similarities to family members—played a role in shaping these Britons' encounters with, and senses of belonging in, Anglo-Indian communities. At the same time, physical similarity could act as an imagined and felt point of connection between separated family members, marking a discussed and embodied link to one another. However, in both respects, physical appearance and family 'likeness' always also contained the possibility of slipping into the unknown, with recognition most often a mere flash, a brief moment of encounter or connection. The rest of the time, similarities remained intangible, incomplete, unreliable, unrealised and unrecognised.

By the time William Beynon was stationed on the North-West Frontier in the late nineteenth century, his family had been involved in India, particularly with the military, for at least three generations. He found that his physical appearance, including his red hair and fair complexion, instantly marked him as a Beynon to many people whom he encountered. Writing home in July 1896, he reported, 'I have met more people who know you all or have been to Ashburn Place. The good old "family likeness" is cropping out again—one lady told me she thought I must be a Beynon from the "family likeness."' ⁵⁷⁶ The following year, he met another woman who had visited the Beynon's Surrey home, Culverlands. In describing how she had recognised him, he wrote, 'I cant get away from you, I really believe the family is known to half the civilized world.' ⁵⁷⁷ In making such comparisons, Beynon and observers framed his appearance as an embodied symbol of belonging and history both in India and in Britain. While the seat of the family was firmly located in specific sites in the metropole, the family took on a much wider presence, able to 'crop out' at a moment's notice on the bodies and in the memories of people in India.

Physical similarity could act as a complicated and unsettling site of connection and disconnection for family members separated within India as well as

⁵⁷⁶ BL, Mss Eur D830/25, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Simla, 14 July 1896.

⁵⁷⁷ BL, Mss Eur D830/24, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon, W. Lawrence Beynon to mother Charlotte Beynon, Almora, 11 July 1897.

between Britain and India. Although physically closer to one another, relatives in India were no more assured of frequent face-to-face contact with one another. While leaves to Britain were common features of military and civil service positions, British travel within India was restricted not only by work schedules and regulations, but also by fears about season, climate and environment. Two of the Robinson brothers expected to go at least ten years without crossing paths either in India or on coordinated leaves to Britain.⁵⁷⁸ Such lengthy separations, accompanied by large family sizes, age gaps between siblings, and the circulations of movement typical of Anglo-Indian families, meant that siblings and other relatives sometimes met for the first time as adults in India. The elder Robinson brothers had left to positions in Bengal when the younger ones were still children. As such, before meeting his older brother John in Meerut in early 1858, Jardy worried to his mother: 'I wonder if I shall know him.'⁵⁷⁹ While physical recognition could symbolise or interlink with another kind of familiarity or connection—'knowing' one's brother could suggest both recognising him and knowing him as a person—the feeling or fear of not knowing could foster or reflect a disturbing sense of disconnection within the family.

Letters about the 1884 meeting between Lewis (Loo) and Helen Ilbert in Simla provide another example of the ways in which family connection and the influence of life in India—read through themes of change, recognition, belonging and memory—were framed in interpretations of each other's physical appearances. In her letters to their mother, Helen focused on changes to Lewis's body as a marker of the passage of time since their last meeting, and more specifically of the impact of India as a particular conjunction of space and time on his appearance. On their first meeting, she reported: 'He is somewhat changed in face as he is *very* thin & his eyes look so deep set & hollow & his nose so big—but he says they all look like that at the end of the Rains.'⁵⁸⁰ She also emphasised recognition and continuity through descriptions of her memories of Lewis, situating him firmly within a shared family context of the past. In one letter, she assured their mother that 'he has the same sweet smile,' while in another, she wrote, 'every now & then when I look at him I think he is not a stone changed from the Loo who went out 5 years ago... His voice

⁵⁷⁸ BL, Mss Eur F142/61, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Jardy Robinson to father William Scott Robinson, Cawnpore, 14 April [1858].

⁵⁷⁹ BL, Mss Eur F142/61, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Jardy Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, Meerut, 5 February 1858.

⁵⁸⁰ BL, Mss Eur D594/42, Sir Courtenay Peregrine Ilbert, Helen Ilbert to mother Rose Ilbert, Simla, 12 October 1884.

is deeper than it used to be, but sweet still & he says the same funny things in the same quiet way with a twinkle in his eye.⁵⁸¹ This kind of physical familiarity was not only a matter of situating long-separated siblings within a remembered and shared family. It was also about assuring near and distant family members that India had not irrevocably changed his respectable British character and deportment, even if it had temporarily changed his body. To this end, Helen indicated that his cheeks were already ‘filling out’ after the Rains, and his ‘manners are as delightful as ever, not a bit “jungly.”’ Indeed, in ‘handsome new dress clothes,’ he looked ‘so well... modest & unassuming,’ and had already made an excellent impression on the social elite of Simla.⁵⁸²

For his part, Lewis reported to their father on the consistent appearance of Helen and their brother Courtenay as signs of their health and wellness in Simla’s social and physical context:

I was particularly glad to find no change whatever in either Courtenay or Helen, I did expect to find the latter a little changed but she really does not look a day older than when I last saw her and, she is looking very well & jolly. Courtenay looks if anything younger, this climate evidently agrees with him.⁵⁸³

‘This climate,’ as the rest of his letter explained, was one of the cooler parts of India—‘delicious but very cold.’ As such, Lewis suggested, their healthy appearance and lack of change was probably associated with Simla’s more ‘home’-like environment.⁵⁸⁴

While the Ilberts were relieved to find and explain traces of familiarity in each other’s physical appearances despite their presence in India, an 1861 meeting between Jardy and Willy Robinson in Cawnpore underscores the potentially unsettling place of appearance in separated family relationships. This encounter, described by Willy to their mother in a later letter, situates physical appearance, recognition and the family ‘likeness’ as central to the ways in which they understood their relationship as brothers in India. Here, disjunctures of recognition and traces of family similarity came to symbolise the potentially fractured and tenuously connected

⁵⁸¹ BL, Mss Eur D594/42, Sir Courtenay Peregrine Ilbert, Helen Ilbert to mother Rose Ilbert, Simla, 12 October 1884 and 18 October 1884.

⁵⁸² BL, Mss Eur D594/42, Sir Courtenay Peregrine Ilbert, Helen Ilbert to mother Rose Ilbert, Simla, 18 October 1884.

⁵⁸³ BL, Mss Eur D594/42, Sir Courtenay Peregrine Ilbert, Lewis Ilbert to father Peregrine Ilbert, Simla, 19 October 1884.

⁵⁸⁴ BL, Mss Eur D594/42, Sir Courtenay Peregrine Ilbert, Lewis Ilbert to father Peregrine Ilbert, Simla, 19 October 1884.

nature of siblinghood in Anglo-Indian families. In this case, Willy had not recognised his brother, a disconnection that unsettled him even (or especially) as Jardy identified him immediately:

Getting out of the train I saw several officers standing about but none came near my ideas, & I was just stepping into a carriage to go to the hotel when up drove another officer in a cab, I took a good squint & said to myself that *cant* be him, when he jumped out & recognised me at once so you see I cannot be much changed from the 'boy' of former years; he said he should have known me anywhere, I should certainly have cut him dead in the streets had we met.

This letter suggests an uncomfortable slippage between the brother and the stranger fostered by long-term separations both between Britain and India, and within India itself. As the rest of the letter explains, Willie was only able to incorporate Jardy into his knowledge and memory of family by drawing connections between his physical appearance and mannerisms and those of their brothers, whom he did know and recognise: 'After talking a little the likeness came back to me; he is *very* like Henry sometimes more especially in manner & voice, & at other times I caught a trace of John.'⁵⁸⁵ This trace of family similarity eventually marked Jardy's body with a sense of belonging and history in Willy's family, which could then shape understandings of his character and their relationship, but this process was not inevitable. As always, it required work to inscribe appearance with meanings and connections to family.

Coda: dress, family, empire

Dress was everywhere for Britons in the empire. In new environments, they found their own clothing uncomfortable and impractical, while in every colonial place, they encountered people who dressed differently from themselves. As they did at home, Britons abroad daily reproduced, negotiated and challenged the meanings of dress—their own and the dress of others—in relation to identity, power and the classification of people. In so doing, they repeatedly mobilised the power of dress and appearance as symbolic communication, and their resulting actions simultaneously reinforced, unsettled and reworked the assumptions and meanings embedded in dress behaviour. Configurations of colonial rule and society were always shaped by the material and the visible as well as by less concrete discourses on

⁵⁸⁵ BL, Mss Eur F142/55, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Willy Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, Lucknow, 13 December 1861.

empire and difference. Dressing thus became an everyday enactment and imagination of Britishness, difference and power throughout the empire. Embedded in this symbolism, however, was also a consistent reminder of disjuncture and discomfort, as dress could act as a constant, tangible and ritualised marker of distance from what was understood and acceptable in Britain.

Colonists and colonisers around the world engaged with, described, imagined, and fantasised the forms and meanings of indigenous dress, nakedness and appearance.⁵⁸⁶ Part of a larger construction of difference, concerns with indigenous dress served to create and mark boundaries between coloniser and colonised in immediately visual and material ways. Discourses on civilisation, respectability, duty and belonging were deeply embedded in this process, as were the performances and perceptions of identities grounded in gender, class, race, nation and empire. At the same time, however, dress embodied the discomforts, anxieties and complexities of colonial identities, since clothing was a personal expression and performance that could enable passing or create uncomfortable ambiguities in appearance. A reminder that looking like something did not always entail *being* it, the meanings of dress were mimicked, mocked, resisted, rejected, reworked and appropriated by a range of actors in the empire. The resulting uncertainty could unsettle distinctions, as well as sharpen determinations to maintain them, leading to a constant renegotiation of meaning that reflected the tensions and contexts of particular sites of empire.

In this sense, colonisers were not simply concerned with indigenous dress. Britons became increasingly interested in the regulation of their own clothing around the empire in the second half of the nineteenth century. This drawing and tightening of boundaries around appearance was particularly fraught with emotion and anxiety in India, with its potent combination of concerns about violence, climate, disease and degeneration. Here, clothing was situated, literally, between British bodies and India. Again, though, there were uncomfortable moments of slippage, when Indian servants bathed and had contact with naked British bodies; when British-educated Indians began to wear Western clothing; and when Anglo-Indians wore Indian materials and styles.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁶ See Peggy Brock, 'Nakedness and Clothing in Early Encounters Between Aboriginal People of Central Australia, Missionaries and Anthropologists,' *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 8, 1 (Spring 2007); and Philippa Levine, 'States of Undress: Nakedness and the Colonial Imagination,' *Victorian Studies* 50, 2 (Winter 2008): 189-219.

⁵⁸⁷ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 66 and 175-76; and Tarlo, *Clothing Matters*, 38-39.

The symbolism of dress as a marker of identity in the empire was not always consciously conceived as such by individuals. One of the reasons why dress was such a potent point of symbolic power was because of its common sense of banality, the ways in which it was so absorbed into the daily routines of Britons from the highest echelons of imperial governance to the settlers, missionaries, miners, prisoners and others who filled out the rest of the colonising population around the world. In this sense, it might be expected that dress would be taken for granted, framed as uninteresting or unworthy of comment. However, as family letters between Britain and India suggest, dress was at times an important, repeated and fraught topic of discussion. These letters do not tell the totality of the history of colonial dress, but rather open a particular window onto the relationship between family and empire in this site. By probing the contexts in which clothing was considered interesting, important or meaningful in family correspondence, we might gain some insight into the wider reasons why the symbolism of dress ebbed and flowed in the everyday communications, experiences and relationships of individuals in the empire.

Here, I consider briefly why dress and appearance might offer a useful lens for examining family encounters with India by asking what we see when we look through this lens into British Columbia. While dress offers a useful tool for thinking comparatively and expansively about wider concerns of empire—difference, identity, belonging, home, rule, health, family and the body—these issues resonated differently in British Columbia than they did in India, and this was reflected in correspondence. In general, while British Columbian families did occasionally mention clothing or appearance in their letters, the topic had neither the intensity nor the frequency of Anglo-Indian discussions of dress. Thinking these two contexts together suggests ways of rethinking and resituating of conclusions about dress in India, as I find both a slippery asymmetry and a fleeting sense of connection in the relationships between these places, dress, empire and family. In the process, a comparative consideration of British Columbia and India illustrates the ways in which these were different but not wholly distinct contexts, partially sharing discourses on Britishness, empire and fashion, but also reshaping them to the specifics of place and time.

Explaining the comparative silence—or rather the quieter traces of dress—in British Columbian letters is impossible in any certain, straightforward way. The British encounter with British Columbia was, as with India, profoundly visual and

physical. However, settler dress behaviour was shaped by very different sensory and embodied experiences. On a basic level, the requirements of the environment were not the same in a familiar temperate climate and a feared tropical region. Especially on the coast, British Columbian clothing could be in many respects similar to that worn in Britain. In urban areas, this included formal fashions for social occasions, while throughout the colony it also needed to be practical for manual work, cold and wet conditions, and sometimes a lack of opportunities for laundry or care. Overall, in this sense, clothing might have been seen as a less useful lens for explaining the colonial everyday in British Columbia in terms of what distinguished it from the metropole.

It might be more evocative to consider family, dress and empire in relation to the more nuanced, fleeting, tentative and complicated imaginings of British Columbia, both in the colony and in the metropole. In India, the focus was on drawing boundaries around Anglo-Indian society, binding it together and protecting British communities and British bodies from the challenges and violence of both Indians and India. In this process, as I have suggested, dress and appearance were situated as portable and visual markers of one's place in an anxiously racialised and classed group, indicating and producing a sense of legitimate, respectable belonging within a ruling community. At the same time, clothing stood between what were interpreted as vulnerable bodies and threatening surroundings. The intersections of dress and family, in this context, could suggest a sense of familiarity and belonging, comfort and connection that was carried intimately close to the body as well as projected outward to others.

In British Columbia, the colonial focus was less on drawing boundaries around an existing, contained community, but was rather on building and expanding into new physical and social spaces that were imagined as empty. Although indigenous people appear in family letters on occasion, the people primarily 'othered' as threats in this correspondence were rough American miners, who were criticised and sometimes feared as representing the antithesis of British rule, law and order.⁵⁸⁸ Appearance, including dress, played a much more minor role in defining identity in this sense since the visual was not generally a useful marker for dividing British from American. While looking the same or similar brought its own discomforts, British

⁵⁸⁸ For example, Willard E. Ireland, 'First Impressions: Letter of Colonel Richard Clement Moody, R. E., to Arthur Blackwood, February 1, 1859,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 15 (January-April 1988): 103.

encounters with this kind of otherness and productions of self-identity perhaps thus relied less on the visual as they sought to assert a sense of belonging, legitimacy and control in British Columbia.

Overall, appearance and the body functioned to suggest a kind of belonging in British Columbia in a somewhat different way than it did for India. For most individuals, the family was less relevant for defining embodied belonging in British Columbia. While for those in India, physical similarities between relatives sometimes offered new arrivals an immediate personal sense of legitimacy and attachment by being recognised in the Anglo-Indian community, British Columbian families did not have the same kind of long-term multi-generational involvement in the place. Rather, their bodies and appearances could only offer a sense of belonging in British Columbia primarily in the sense that white, British bodies were legitimised as markers of colonial power and assumed to have a right to settle the territory. This racialised identity was understood as less under threat in British Columbia, however, and formed less of an anxious point of discussion than it did in India.

Dress could, however, play a similar role as a marker of worn or embodied family, belonging and connection in British Columbia and India. When dress and appearance did surface in letters from British Columbia, it was usually in relation to distant family instead of the colony itself. Families separated between Britain and British Columbia maintained the same kind of clothing, pattern and knowledge exchange as in India, with female relatives sewing and purchasing clothing according to specific requests appropriate for changing bodies and routines in the colony.⁵⁸⁹ While this could offer distant family a lens through which to consider the physical experience of British Columbia—climate, physical labour and wilderness—even more so, it forged a form of connection across space between family members, grounded partly in a sense of duty to one another.

Likewise, in British Columbia as in India, the body could represent deeply felt connections to or disconnections from distant relatives through interpretations of physical appearance. As there was less of a fear that this colonial site would cause degeneration in relatives, either physically or in terms of character, discussions of changing bodies were often restricted to greying hair and wrinkles—the passage of

⁵⁸⁹ For example, BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 9, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Fish Lakes, 11 March 1894.

time more so than the influence of place.⁵⁹⁰ Looking in mirrors and at photographs, and recognising traces of distant loved ones in one's bodies and mannerisms, may have still acted as a kind of embodied connection with family members regardless of the colonial context. However, this was not something that was generally included in these family letters. In British Columbia as in India, then, the intersections between dress, appearance and family could be emotionally experienced, momentarily important, everyday banality or deeply symbolic, as well as irrelevant, silent or absent.

Overall, for Anglo-Indian families, dress marked a complex negotiation of respectability, place, identity, change, distance and difference (within India, and between Britain and India). Part of the material and visual everyday in India, dress and appearance mediated between British bodies and the outer world that they conceptualised as dangerous, threatening and profoundly 'other.' Its central presence in family letters suggests that this was of interest, something that marked Anglo-Indian life as different, and a topic that could be intimately tied to family interests whether in the long-distance maintenance of family identities and knowledge, the extension and adaptation of gendered roles of clothing production and care across space, or the physical embodiment of family similarity and connection. Considered in isolation, dress appears to have been a central way in which Britons encountered and interpreted empire through a lens of family.

Thought together with British Columbia, this becomes a more tentative and fragile connection. While family similarity maintained importance for separated relatives, appearance carried different meanings in the new settlements of British Columbia, largely divorced from a sense of family identity and historical belonging in that place. The postal exchange of clothing was similar in British Columbia, though less frequent. In many other respects, though, dress was comparatively absent from British Columbian letters, even in terms of settler descriptions of daily life and encounters with the colonial environment. Other topics (food, for example) were positioned as more effective symbols of difference and the everyday in British Columbia. The silences about dress in British Columbian letters thus underscore the nuanced, fleeting and sometimes unpredictable ways in which individuals considered it an appropriate and useful topic of discussion with distant family members—an

⁵⁹⁰ For example, BCA, MS-2112, Evans family, John Evans to daughter Mary Ellen, Van Winkle, 6 November 1875.

everyday visual and tactile routine that might express personal feelings or family experiences in specific sites of empire.

Chapter 5. 'One Unbroken Family': Death at a Distance

On 9 May 1862, 25-year-old civil servant Henry Houlton Robinson died in Midnapore. His sudden death from a bowel haemorrhage, apparently related to an abscessed liver, came as a shock to his tightly knit family. His brother, Willy, also held a post with the Bengal Civil Service, but had been about to take leave to visit his parents and siblings in Dyrham, Gloucestershire. When, just a week before his intended departure, Willy heard of his brother's death, he wrote to his mother, 'now how all is altered, it drives me half frantic to think of it. I cant write any more.'⁵⁹¹ However, even as Willy felt that the pain took away his words, the Robinsons continued to write. With members in India and England, the letter became their primary strategy for grappling with the changing family, the emotional struggle and the practical arrangements resulting from Henry's death.

Other families in the British Empire likewise found that correspondence came to play a key role in shaping their responses to death, burial and mourning at a distance. The specifics of these letters differed by family, but they generally included formal condolence letters, as well as those written as a death approached and throughout the mourning period. Some families primarily wrote to one another at times of death, using the occasion to re-connect and share news that had accumulated since the last death.⁵⁹² For other families, these clusters of news were less apparent as relatives wrote to one another more regularly, but death-related correspondence took on different forms, tones and content. Typically, regular correspondents and close family members wrote long letters (sometimes not wholly focused on the death and the deceased), while more distant relatives and friends sent one or two shorter condolence notes. As with other family correspondence, most condolence letters were written by women, although men did write when they were especially close with the deceased or the survivors.

Whether relatives had been in close touch or not, death represented a rupture in their imaginings and experiences of family life. It challenged the boundaries of

⁵⁹¹ BL, Mss Eur F142/55, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Willy Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, Calcutta, 2 June 1862.

⁵⁹² For example, BCA, MS-2047, Thomas Porter, James Porter to sister-in-law, Victoria, 10 March 1859.

family, changed its relationships, and provided disconcerting reminders of disconnection and distances of all kinds—not only between the living and the dead, but also between the living in colony and the living in metropole. In an era when proximity to family was considered a key aspect of a ‘good death,’ physical distance could be interpreted as contributing to extra trials for families in mourning. Letters about death enabled relatives to respond to such challenges by asserting or forging claims to connection and relationship, however tenuous these might have been. In the process, correspondence operated as a family strategy against fracture and separation by simultaneously resisting and incorporating distance into mourning.

This chapter explores the relationships between family, distance, place, empire and death in correspondence between Britain and British Columbia or India. It examines first the ways in which death was understood and linked to each of these sites, with particular expectations about death and family in Victorian Britain; deeply rooted and anxious characterisations of India as a place of death; and, in contrast, a much more positive interpretation of British Columbia as a comparatively healthy and safe site for British bodies. After outlining this context, the chapter then provides four lenses onto epistolary family responses to death: the navigation of distance and togetherness in condolence letters; the struggle to come to terms with burial in distant sites of empire, especially India; the negotiation of changing ideas of family and home after a death; and the practicalities of dealing with inheritance, wills, finances and potential family conflict from afar. In so doing, the chapter argues that letters about death—whether formal condolence letters or the more extended correspondence surrounding a death—revealed a particular form of family interaction across the distances of empire, and to an extent in relation to specific places. While everyday descriptions of imperial sites produced certain kinds of personal knowledge and connection between metropole and colony, family responses to death constituted an urgent and emotional condensation of such themes and functions. Both as a specific kind of correspondence and as part of the wider family practice of letter-writing in the empire, then, these letters worked as signs of separation and modes of connection for imperial families as they sought to claim relationships in the face of distance and death.

Places of death

Britain

Death rates in Britain underwent a significant change in the Victorian era, as improved medical intervention, sanitation and other developments accompanied industrialisation. The early to mid-Victorian years were characterised by comparatively high mortality rates, especially among infants and children, but these dropped throughout the century. In 1868, there were 21.8 deaths per 1 000 annually in England and Wales, and only 18.1 twenty years later. Mortality statistics dropped even more in the final decade of the nineteenth century, eventually hitting only 14.8 deaths per 1 000 in 1908. This decline affected classes and ages differently, but ultimately resulted in a 'gradual move from infancy to old age as the most probable time of death.'⁵⁹³

The historiography on death, dying and burial in nineteenth-century Britain has tended to focus on what Ruth Richardson calls 'class-bound death cultures.'⁵⁹⁴ In two of the most thorough examinations of working-class experiences with death, Julie-Marie Strange traces flexible and complex forms of grief that she argues were not just poor material imitations of middle-class rituals, while Richardson situates the nineteenth-century pauper funeral in the context of the 1832 Anatomy Act.⁵⁹⁵ Most of the focus on Victorian ways of death, however, has emphasised the practices and expectations of the middle and upper classes. In the most comprehensive study on this topic, Pat Jalland argues that middle- and upper-class British families were embedded in a particular set of ideals that constituted their notion of a 'good death.' Especially during the early and mid-Victorian years, this ideal profoundly shaped approaches and responses to deaths within the family circle, although it was not necessarily fully achieved in their own experiences. According to Jalland's assessment, the middle-class idea of a good death had the following characteristics:

There should be time, and physical and mental capacity, for the completion of temporal and spiritual business... The dying person should be conscious and lucid until the end, resigned to God's will, able to beg forgiveness for past sins and to prove his or her worthiness for salvation. Pain and suffering should be borne with

⁵⁹³ Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 5.

⁵⁹⁴ Ruth Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*, 2nd ed. (London: Phoenix, 2001), 262.

⁵⁹⁵ Julie-Marie Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*.

fortitude, and even welcomed as a final test of fitness for heaven and willingness to pay for past sins.⁵⁹⁶

Ideally, death was a family event, with close relatives gathered together at the deathbed and more extended family available nearby. Indeed, Jalland argues, ‘The vital importance of family solidarity and sympathy in coping with death and participating in its rituals tended to be taken for granted in middle- and upper-class families. It rarely required stating in writing, especially because family members were usually together at times of death.’⁵⁹⁷ The responsibility for nursing a dying relative generally fell to women, while in many cases families were also heavily involved in the religious preparation of the dying.⁵⁹⁸

By the 1870s and 1880s, elements of this good death had begun to shift as both mortality rates and Evangelical fervour declined across the country.⁵⁹⁹ Medical advances meant that death was increasingly associated with ‘specific diseases rather than divine intervention.’⁶⁰⁰ As a result, families became more concerned with physical suffering, and later in the period, they could even avoid acknowledging that a death was imminent at all.⁶⁰¹ However, middle-class deathbed scenes were still idealised as family spaces in which loved ones could support one another, nurse the dying, and receive and record their final wishes.

Many of the family collections studied in this thesis reflect similar understandings of and emphases on a good death. Matilda Robinson’s lengthy description of her daughter Annie’s 1859 death in Bath, for example, stressed the ‘beautiful’ way in which she died in faith and peace.⁶⁰² Such sentiments also appeared in family correspondence from other sites, with Bessy Sconce’s depiction of her husband Herbert’s 1867 death en route from India to Britain underscoring his faith

⁵⁹⁶ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 26.

⁵⁹⁷ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 26. On representations of family and domesticity in times of death, see Terri Renee Sabatos, ‘Images of Death and Domesticity in Victorian Britain’ (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2001).

⁵⁹⁸ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 31.

⁵⁹⁹ Jalland’s work emphasises the influence of Evangelicalism. Other religious or spiritual beliefs (and non-beliefs) also impacted British responses to death, especially as the century wore on. Jalland includes some discussion of this, but for two more focused studies, see David S. Nash, “‘Look in Her Face and Lose Thy Dread of Dying’: The Ideological Importance of Death to the Secularist Community in Nineteenth Century Britain,” *Journal of Religious History* 9, 2 (December 1995): 158-80; and Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

⁶⁰⁰ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 6.

⁶⁰¹ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 52-53. For a concise but thorough overview, see Pat Jalland, ‘Victorian Death and its Decline: 1850-1918,’ in *Death in England: An Illustrated History*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Clare Gittings (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 230-55.

⁶⁰² BL, Mss Eur F142/56, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Matilda Robinson to son Willy Robinson, Dyrham, 24 March 1859.

and acceptance of death. According to Sconce, he died ‘most peacefully... so quietly, and without the slightest struggle.’ She continued:

He was not troubled with any doubts or fears, but all was perfect peace & trust in Jesus. He said once, ‘My Father said, “Oh God save my Soul”—and that has been my prayer a thousand times. I have a *humble, humble humble* hope’—and I said—you feel quite at *peace*? and he said ‘Yes’ in a strong clear voice. He sent messages to all which I will write down another time. About 12 o’clk I took him each child separately, to receive his dying blessing. He spoke a few earnest words to each of the elder ones, which I hope they may always remember. After this, he told me to read the prayers for those at the point of Death... He has been saved, & taken from a great deal of suffering.⁶⁰³

Sconce’s letter to her mother demonstrates that notions of an ideal death could not only impact the kind of language used to read and understand a death after the fact, but they also shaped the actions of those at the deathbed. The conversations between Bessy and Herbert, and between Herbert and his children, were deeply embedded in middle-class mid-Victorian assumptions about the value of deathbed relationships between the dying, the family and Christian faith. The emphasis on peace and religious acceptance continued into the later period in Maggie (née Beveridge) Bell’s letter about her mother’s 1885 death. She described it as relatively painless, quiet and tranquil, noting that ‘her face was beautiful after death, with a noble, calm expression.’ However, typical of this later period, Allie and David Beveridge both also expressed thankfulness that their mother had escaped ‘long protracted illness,’ and all three suggested with some comfort that their mother might not have even known that she was dying.⁶⁰⁴

In Victorian Britain, rituals of mourning—including funerals, dress, burial and letters of condolence—worked to regulate the expression of social grief while encouraging support from relatives and a wider community. Overall, these practices helped to sustain, remake and define the family circle following a death, in part by clarifying the meanings of gender and relationship in mourning. The body was often initially laid out by a servant or nurse, but close family members would have had the opportunity to view and bid farewell to the dead in the home. This was highly valued, not least because middle- and upper-class funerals were less oriented to the

⁶⁰³ BL, Mss Eur C492, Captain Herbert Sconce, Bessy Sconce to mother, Suez, 18 May 1867.

⁶⁰⁴ BL, Mss Eur C176/162, Henry Beveridge, Maggie Bell to brother Henry and sister-in-law Annette Beveridge, [n.p., n.d.]; BL, Mss Eur C176/152, Henry Beveridge, Allie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Edinburgh, 4 March 1885; and Mss Eur C176/153, Henry Beveridge, David Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Durham, 4 March 1885.

family. Women were expected to be too emotional and unrestrained to be present at the ceremony, so these were almost exclusively male-dominated events.⁶⁰⁵ Gendered expectations of mourning were also apparent in dress practices. In the early to mid-Victorian era, widows were expected to wear full mourning dress for two years, after which point they began to move into partial mourning. For women grieving the death of a relative who was not a husband, the expected times were shorter, while men's mourning dress was generally worn for much briefer periods and the clothing itself was less distinguished from their usual wear.⁶⁰⁶ Such dress practices 'identified the recently bereaved, and doubtless attracted sympathy and support... [Mourning dress] not only marked respect for the dead, but was a barrier against unwanted intrusions on private feelings.'⁶⁰⁷ At the same time, it marked visually onto bodies certain kinds of family relationships with associated levels of expected or acceptable grief.

While family members were not all together at the funeral and each had different conventions of mourning clothing, the cemetery and gravesite were important and inclusive spaces of mourning and memory after the burial. Family plots offered a place for grief and consolation, while also 'evok[ing] a sense of closeness to the dead person, by associating him or her with a particular place.'⁶⁰⁸ During the nineteenth century, the nature of this landscape was undergoing significant changes.⁶⁰⁹ For many middle-class families, the places of burial shifted from the parish church to vast cemeteries on the outskirts of urban areas as fears associated with disease, sanitation, overcrowded churchyards and population growth led to extensive burial reform. From the 1830s onward, large city cemetery projects were undertaken across Britain, including the Glasgow Necropolis and London's

⁶⁰⁵ By the latter decades of the century, the widow did occasionally attend the church service (but not the burial) as long as she did not speak to anyone there. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 211-12. For more on Victorian funerals, see John Morley, *Death, Heaven and the Victorians* (Brighton: Art Gallery and Museum, 1970), 50-51; James Stevens Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1972); and Jalland, 'The Funeral Week,' chapter 10 in *Death in the Victorian Family*.

⁶⁰⁶ By the 1880s, such strict attention to dress codes was in decline, partly in response to the extended mourning period of Queen Victoria after Albert's death. Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, 200. For more, see Lou Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History* (London: G. Allen, 1983); Esther Schor, *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Sonia A. Bedikian, 'The Death of Mourning: From Victorian Crepe to the Little Black Dress,' *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying* 57, 1 (2008): 35-52.

⁶⁰⁷ Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, 200.

⁶⁰⁸ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 291.

⁶⁰⁹ Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, 177; and Jalland, 'Funeral Reform and the Cremation Debate,' chapter 9 in *Death in the Victorian Family*.

Kensal Green Cemetery. As opposed to crowded churchyards or vaults, these featured garden styles, open spaces, greenery, grand monuments and classical designs. One of the key architects of this movement, John Loudon, argued that the new cemeteries appealed to the values of moral reform and taste that characterised the middle classes, while they might also be able to positively influence the working classes.⁶¹⁰

For families separated in the British Empire, understandings and experiences of death and mourning remained grounded in these metropolitan discourses, practices and traditions. However, interpretations of specific imperial places were also layered onto these responses to death. Some sites of empire were framed as places of death—or in David Arnold's term, 'deathscapes'—especially during periods of heightened violence or rampant tropical disease. For example, parts of Africa became known as the 'white man's graveyard,' while British interpretations of Indian environments and people were inextricably entangled with fears of death, disease and degeneration. In contrast, British Columbia and other temperate settler colonies were more rarely imagined as connected with death, and as a result, a different rhetoric resonated in family correspondence about those sites.

India

The imagination of India as a deathscape and a threat to British lives was rooted in the period of Company rule, when fears of tropical disease, violent death and an apparently hostile environment pushed Anglo-Indians to see tragic death all around them. David Arnold suggests that, in the early nineteenth century, 'Europeans... saw themselves as being pursued by death' in India, especially from cholera, malaria and dysentery. This, he argues, encouraged them to understand the place 'through the depressing prism of their own mortality.'⁶¹¹ Representations of India as a place of death, disease and degeneration were filtered through the lenses of

⁶¹⁰ J. C. Loudon, *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries, and on the Improvement of Churchyards* (London: Longman, 1843), 1. These developments had roots in earlier periods and developments abroad. Some scholars have demonstrated that the designs of Anglo-Indian cemeteries, for example, preempted and impacted nineteenth-century metropolitan burial reform. See Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, 29-30; Elizabeth Buettner, 'Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia in Postcolonial Britain and India,' *History and Memory* 18, 1 (Spring/Summer 2006): 10-12; and Trev Lynn Broughton, 'The *Bengal Obituary*: Reading and Writing Calcutta Graves in the Mid Nineteenth Century,' *Journal of Victorian Culture* 15, 1 (April 2010): especially 50.

⁶¹¹ David Arnold, 'Deathscapes: India in an Age of Romanticism and Empire, 1800-1856,' *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 26, 4 (2004): 340.

Romanticism and Gothic Christianity, which framed deaths in India as ‘exceptionally violent, swift, and wasteful of human life... even more distressing than “at home.”’⁶¹² The association of India with death had a complex and contradictory role in imperial rhetoric. On the one hand, it associated the place with a sense of fear, danger and otherness that discouraged Anglo-Indians from identifying with it. On the other hand, however, links between death and imperial sites could justify claims to the maintenance of empire as British bodies were buried there, a point which marked the land as a kind of British space and made survivors unwilling to abandon the graves of their compatriots.⁶¹³

Focusing on literary representations, Arnold argues that these discourses were on the decline in the second half of the nineteenth century, along with mortality rates among the white ruling classes.⁶¹⁴ However, family correspondence reveals a continuing narrative of Indian deathscapes in personal lives. Through the late nineteenth century, families expressed deep anxieties about the possibilities and experiences of death in India as they linked the place itself with heightened and deeply personal threats to British bodies and lives.

As in the earlier period, late-nineteenth-century letters emphasised how suddenly and unexpectedly death could come in India. In early May 1858, Franklin Kendall wrote to his mother, ‘In India people are alive and well one day, and the next in their graves,’ while Jardy Robinson declared from Barrackpore in 1861, ‘In England you can’t tell if you will die the morrow but out here at sunrise you can’t say you will see the sun-set.’⁶¹⁵ Sometimes a pre-existing weakness was blamed for an individual’s rapid death, but in general, when describing particular deaths, writers seemed shaken that a strong and vibrant person could die so suddenly or that a minor illness could escalate so quickly.⁶¹⁶ In India, these rapid deaths were all the

⁶¹² Arnold, ‘Deathscapes,’ 340.

⁶¹³ John Wolffe, *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion, and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6; and Arnold, ‘Deathscapes,’ 343.

⁶¹⁴ Arnold, ‘Deathscapes,’ 351.

⁶¹⁵ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 6-8 May 1858; and BL, Mss Eur F142/61, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Jardy Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, Barrackpore, 11 April 1861. See also BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Jullundur, 29 March 1870.

⁶¹⁶ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 6-8 May 1858; BL, Mss Eur D594/42, Sir Courtney Peregrine Ilbert, Helen Ilbert to sister-in-law Maye Ilbert, Chapslee, 5 August 1884; and BL, Mss Eur D594/42, Sir Courtney Peregrine Ilbert, Helen Ilbert to mother Rose Ilbert, Chapslee, 14-15 August 1884.

more upsetting because they struck young adults in such high numbers.⁶¹⁷ There were also deep concerns about the health of Anglo-Indian children, who were seen as more susceptible to the dangers of climate and culture. Largely because of these worries about ‘drooping,’ degeneration and death, children were sent to Britain from a young age if it could be afforded.⁶¹⁸

Burial could be almost as quick as death in the tropical climate, where British customs had to be sped up in order to counter the realities of decomposition.⁶¹⁹ At the same time, Anglo-Indian letter-writers dwelled at length on what they understood as barbaric and disgusting rituals of disposal practiced by Indians. In one case, Franklin Kendall described to his mother, ‘They anoint the dead man with butter and strew a lot of flowers over him, then carry him away and burn him, making all the time the most hideous row imaginable, beating their tomtoms and dancing and singing more as if they were going to a wedding than a funeral.’⁶²⁰ In this context, burial could become inflected with a beleaguered sense of British Christianity, as Anglo-Indians struggled to uphold familiar conventions in the face of violence, difference and challenge from Indian people and places.

In this sense, deaths in India were framed as tragic not only because they were sudden and affected the young, but also because of the pervasive Anglo-Indian insistence that Britain—not India—was ‘home.’ Relatives were very concerned with the idea that their loved ones might die alone, or with strangers in a hostile and unfamiliar place far from home, elements that contravened family-oriented models of the good death in Britain. Willy Robinson particularly dwelled on the lonely nature of his brother Henry’s death, writing, ‘poor Henry died among strangers; poor fellow I would give my right arm to have been with him at the last, & receive the message I know he has left for some one; it would I think have softened the blow to me.’⁶²¹

⁶¹⁷ As Pollie Keen noted, ‘All who die of it [fever] seem to be under 28 years old.’ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 21 June 1891. However, James Sutcliffe noted that India could be particularly dangerous for men of ‘mature years’ too, as they might have ‘some weak point in their constitutions’ that could be attacked by the climate. BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 232, James Sutcliffe, James Sutcliffe to mother, Calcutta, 8 August 1860.

⁶¹⁸ BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady (Margaret) Josceline Percy to daughter-in-law Ellen Grant, [?], [n.d., Monday in summer 1877]. For a detailed exploration, see Buettner, *Empire Families*.

⁶¹⁹ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 4 April 1891.

⁶²⁰ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 20 March 1858.

⁶²¹ BL, Mss Eur F142/55, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Willy Robinson to mother and father, [?], 12 May 1862. Lizzie Bruce likewise worried about her father, Alick, as he tried to reach England before dying from liver disease, writing to her aunt Jane, ‘It is dreadful to think of his being all alone.’

Clara Robinson expressed similar feelings, writing to Jardy: ‘my heart aches to think of his lonely death—none of us near him to hold his hand—no one but strangers to hear his last messages.’⁶²² When individuals became ill in India, they attempted to avoid a lonely and distant death, if possible, seeking instead to return to Britain in order to see family and be buried on home soil.⁶²³

Even if they did not have much chance of recovery, Anglo-Indians also hoped that a return to Britain might result in recuperation. In large part, this was because the causes of illness and death in India were seen as directly linked with characteristics of the place itself. Although death rates from tropical diseases were declining by the second half of the nineteenth century, non-medical personnel generally attributed most deaths to the environment or, especially within military communities, to alcohol abuse, which was itself sometimes related to the heat. Pollie Keen outlined one case in which a young sergeant appeared to have died of a combination of the two causes:

The doctor said he must have been dead hours from heat apoplexy and alcohol poisoning or in other words drink and being about in the sun too much. He was such a quiet sort of chap too and I should not think he was more than 28.⁶²⁴

Following the Rebellion, fears about violent death also spiked sharply as correspondents in Britain and India acknowledged the very real possibility that Indians, not disease, would lead to a rapid and painful death far from home.⁶²⁵ Under these circumstances, Indian violence and military deaths became layered onto concerns about British vulnerabilities to climate and tropical disease, framing India as a dangerous place of death in multiple ways for Anglo-Indians.

BL, Mss Eur F455/3, Lt.-Col. Alexander Hervey Blackwood Bruce, Lizzie Bruce to aunt Jane Alexander, Mussoorie, 31 December 1874.

⁶²² BL, Mss Eur F142/62, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Clara Robinson to brother Jardy Robinson, Dyrham, 25 June 1862. See also Broughton, ‘The *Bengal Obituary*,’ 57. Similar sentiments do not appear to have been expressed in family correspondence from British Columbia, even in cases when the dying did not have relatives nearby.

⁶²³ Herbert Sconce, Alick Bruce and Jardy Robinson all attempted to return to Britain when they became fatally ill in India. None of them made it, with Sconce dying in Suez, Bruce dying in Galle and Robinson dying at sea near Aden. For analyses of ocean burials like Robinson’s, see Debra Powell, ‘“It was Hard to Die Frae Hame”: Death, Grief and Mourning among Scottish Migrants to New Zealand, 1840-1890’ (MA thesis, University of Waikato, 2007), chapter 2 (‘“And Down She Sank to a Sailor’s Grave”: Death at Sea, 1840-1980’); and Kirsty Reid, ‘Ocean Funerals: The Sea and Victorian Cultures of Death,’ *Journal for Maritime Research* 13, 1 (May 2011): 37-54.

⁶²⁴ BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, 6 July 1891. See also BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Sialkot, 30 April 1856.

⁶²⁵ For example, BL, Mss Eur C176/151, Henry Beveridge, Phemie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Haverstock Hill, 17 May 1858.

Seeking to protect relatives from the Indian deathscape, those in Britain offered extensive advice regarding how best to care for health and safety in such dangerous conditions. Living well and moderately, they suggested, was the best defence against Indian death. Jemima Beveridge instructed her sons Henry and Allie on appropriate drinks, baths and other behaviour that she believed would help them to ‘escape all the ills incidental to the climate.’⁶²⁶ For families with long Indian histories, the personal fears and experiences of earlier decades impacted the ways that they continued to understand India’s dangers. For example, Margaret Percy warned her son, Charles Grant, about his new position in Hyderabad, which she saw as a good job but also a dangerous one because of the city’s climate. The latter point was felt deeply for Percy because she associated the place with her brother’s death there two decades earlier.⁶²⁷ In this case, Percy did not simply see all of India as a dangerous place, but rather specified that certain places could be particularly threatening to Anglo-Indians.

Other families expressed similar forms of knowledge, clearly understanding different regions to carry varying levels of risk for British bodies and lives. Just before the Rebellion, Alfred Lyall acknowledged that recently annexed regions like Oudh were more dangerous, telling his mother, ‘they say that some young civilians must be sent [there] first, for they cannot afford to let experienced men have their throats cut.’⁶²⁸ The plains continued to pose risks for Britons due to climate-related diseases, especially in the hot season, while Franklin Kendall complained extensively that Bombay was a dangerous city—‘a filthy, beastly place’—with high mortality rates from cholera, fever and dysentery.⁶²⁹

On the other hand, the hills were renowned as healthy and safer options for Anglo-Indians. Letters marvelled about these stations, reassuring distant relatives that there were indeed Indian places that were not so entangled with death, and as a result were not even, in a sense, ‘Indian’ places. Lewis Ilbert wrote to his father from Simla:

⁶²⁶ For example, BL, Mss Eur C176/149, Henry Beveridge, Jemima Beveridge to son Henry Beveridge, Culross, 9 March 1865; and BL, Mss Eur C176/149, Henry Beveridge, Jemima Beveridge to son Allie Beveridge, Culross, 28 March 1865.

⁶²⁷ BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady Margaret (Joseceline) Percy to son Charles Grant, London, 4 February 1880.

⁶²⁸ BL, Mss Eur F132/2, Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall, Alfred Lyall to mother Mary Lyall, Calcutta, 23 January 1856.

⁶²⁹ For example, BL, Mss Eur F528/10, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen, Pollie Keen to mother Mary Holloway, Sialkot, [n.d., letter 6] and 29 August 1891; and BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 7 July 1865.

Helen [his sister] & I have had some jolly walks, this is a splendid place, the views are grand, the climate is delicious but very cold, and it is altogether quite impossible to imagine oneself in India, it is much more like home or Switzerland, a more complete change from Assam could hard to be imagined; it has picked me up most wonderfully.⁶³⁰

Helen, meanwhile, declared that Simla was ‘a most rejuvenating place, I feel quite a giddy girl again, instead of a woman of 30!’⁶³¹

Even when posted to less healthy locations, individual constitutions and behaviours might be able to resist the associated dangers, at least according to some family letters. After receiving a new posting to Allahabad in 1860, George White tried to reassure his sister Jane that he would be in little danger even in such a dangerous climate:

I will tell you honestly that Allahabad is not as good a climate as the one I am at present in, but I hope not to be left long there and I have now arrived at my full strength of constitution and ought to be acclimatized by this time, as I am in my sixth year of Indian service besides I am a regular liver and always take a lot of exercise.⁶³²

Despite such assurances, however, family correspondence makes it clear that Britons continued to fear death for themselves and their relatives in India, seeing it as an ever-present and very real possibility even in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Each family death seemed to confirm and reconfirm these discourses, with Henry Robinson declaring in some of his last recorded words, ‘When I left England I felt I was only coming out here to die.’⁶³³

British Columbia

Attitudes toward death in British Columbia contrasted sharply with the Anglo-Indian experience. In fact, death was hardly a concern in British Columbia, which was framed instead as a healthy place—indeed, much more so than industrialising Britain. Non-indigenous deaths were occasionally tragic (such as suicides after failure in the goldfields), but more often they occasioned little concern

⁶³⁰ BL, Mss Eur D594/42, Sir Courtney Peregrine Ilbert, Lewis Ilbert to father Peregrine Ilbert, Simla, 19 October 1884.

⁶³¹ BL, Mss Eur D594/42, Sir Courtney Peregrine Ilbert, Helen Ilbert to mother Rose Ilbert, Simla, 23 August 1884.

⁶³² BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, [n.p.], 15 January 1860.

⁶³³ BL, Mss Eur F142/60, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Bernard Kendall to William Grey, Midnapore, 11 May 1862.

for unrelated observers.⁶³⁴ British Columbia's mild, temperate and familiar coastal climate, when mentioned at all, was usually associated with improving health. Charles Hayward wrote of its invigorating effects, suggesting, 'I believe this splendid climate would make the weakest strong,' while Charles Newcombe declared, 'My health is excellent here, better than for years: splendid appetite, & able to walk any distance.'⁶³⁵ David Pringle was relieved that his wife and child, sailing to join him in Hope, would not 'suffer by the climate, for it is very healthy.'⁶³⁶ Mary Moody was more contradictory in her descriptions, writing both that 'roughing it in the bush' could do 'much good' as British Columbia was 'such a healthy place... the weather is perfectly delicious,' but also that 'colonial roughing' meant that 'we are all growing prematurely old' and that her ailing husband 'need[ed] English air.'⁶³⁷ Even her complaints, however, did not begin to suggest that British Columbia posed serious threats to the lives of British settlers, only to their health and youth.

Neither did indigenous people appear to pose real risks for settlers, unlike in the Indian case. Instead, they were largely represented as curiosities, strange and sometimes hostile people who were nonetheless badly afflicted by illness, nearing extinction and unable to pose much danger to colonists. In a typical assessment, Tommy Norbury wrote to his mother, 'they are a very diseased lot—breakings out, bad eyes and such. I think about another 10 years will see them all in the Happy Hunting Ground.'⁶³⁸ In general, colonial administrator Arthur Birch declared to his brother, 'we manage to keep them fairly quiet.'⁶³⁹ Unlike other imperial sites that experienced severe uprisings and unrest, nineteenth-century British Columbia saw one primary, but contained, incident of indigenous violence against settlers. In the

⁶³⁴ For example, BCA, MS-2797, John Brough, John Brough to sister, New Westminster, 18 March 1862.

⁶³⁵ CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, Victoria, 17 July 1862; and BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe family, vol. 18, file 1, Charles Newcombe to wife Marian Newcombe, Victoria, 28 October 1883. See also BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family, box 1, file 5, Tommy Norbury to sister Florence, Fort Steele, 15 March 1890. For comments on the difficulties of non-coastal climates in British Columbia, especially in contrast to the mild winters of Victoria, New Westminster and Vancouver (which were 'exactly similar to England'), see BCA, MS-0877, Tommy Norbury, box 1, file 12, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Fort Steele, 7 September 1897.

⁶³⁶ BCA, MS-0369, Alexander Pringle, A. D. Pringle to father, Hope, 7 April 1860.

⁶³⁷ BCA, MS-0060, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, New Westminster, 4 June 1860; BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to sister Emily, Victoria, 2 February [n.y.]; and BCA, MS-0060, Mary Susanna Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, New Westminster, 12 September 1861 and 28 June 1863.

⁶³⁸ BCA, MS-0877, Tommy Norbury, box 1, file 7, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, 16 June 1892.

⁶³⁹ BCA, MS-0061, Birch family, box 1, file 2, reel A00272, Arthur Nonus Birch to John Birch, [New Westminster?], 11 June 1864.

Chilcotin War of 1864, a group of Tsilhqot'in under the leadership of a man named Klatsassin attacked and killed nineteen white men in the Bute Inlet region, including members of a road crew employed by prominent Victoria businessman, Alfred Waddington.⁶⁴⁰ Two expeditionary forces of volunteers were sent to find the attackers, a task that proved impossible for men unfamiliar with the territory and tactics appropriate to it. Eventually Klatsassin and seven others came to the camp of one of the expeditionary forces, allegedly after being offered immunity. Their arrival was interpreted as surrender, however, and they were arrested. Five were charged with murder, convicted (despite Klatsassin's argument that they were waging war rather than committing crimes), and sentenced to hang by Judge Matthew Baillie Begbie.⁶⁴¹

John Brough was a member of these expeditionary forces, going to Bute Inlet twice in order to find Klatsassin and his men. Despite the violence that had occurred, Brough remained largely unconcerned about the threat. Although making a will before he left, once en route he mainly noted deserted villages due to smallpox epidemics, which allowed him to 'admir[e] the landscape before me and [think] on the days when the deserted lodge was in its heyday glory[,] the former remains and the latter passing away.'⁶⁴² Even when the expedition encountered the tribe allegedly responsible for the violence, he described them as follows:

There were some fine looking women among them, most of the young men fled into the woods on our approach probably afraid that they might be taken and like enough some of them deserve hanging. The old men, half naked and bronzed, gazed at us in silence and like enough cursing in their hearts.⁶⁴³

In no way, it seemed, did this group pose a threat to Brough and his companions: the women were attractive but passive, the young men fled, and the old men were unwilling even to voice their hostility. This was typical of family correspondence from British Columbia, when indigenous people were mentioned at all. 'Indians,'

⁶⁴⁰ The war has also been called an uprising or massacre, with clearly different political implications. Smaller incidents of violence attracted less attention in personal letters, political debates or public discussions. One example can be found in BCA, MS-0877, Tommy Norbury, box 1, file 4, Tommy Norbury to father Thomas Norbury, Fort Steele, 13 July 1889.

⁶⁴¹ For more, see Edward Sleight Hewlett, 'Klatsassin,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 9 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <<http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?BioId=38649>>; and the archives and interpretations included with John Lutz, ed., 'We Do Not Know His Name: Klatsassin and the Chilcotin War,' *Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History* (University of Victoria and the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History Project, n.d.) <<http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/sites/klatsassin/home/indexen.html>>.

⁶⁴² BCA, MS-2797, John Brough, diary, [en route to Bute Inlet], 18 September 1864.

⁶⁴³ BCA, MS-2797, John Brough, diary, [en route to Bute Inlet], 25 September 1864.

grizzly bears, climatic extremes and even rough American miners were occasionally used in fiction or memoirs to illustrate the dangers of the backwoods, but there rarely appears to have been outright concern about these on the part of letter-writers in either British Columbia or Britain.⁶⁴⁴

When settlers did die in British Columbia, they were generally buried locally. The most renowned exception to this was Margaret Sophia Cameron, the wife of famed John ‘Cariboo’ Cameron, who made one of the richest strikes in the Cariboo gold rush. When Margaret died on 23 October 1862, John packed her body on a toboggan along the 400-mile road to Victoria, where he temporarily buried her in an alcohol-filled coffin. Following the summer mining season, he returned to Victoria, from where he took her preserved body back to their home in Canada West (now Ontario), reburying her by December 1863.⁶⁴⁵ For those who were less determined or less able to repatriate bodies to other locations, British Columbia had undertakers and cemeteries in major settlements, as well as smaller graveyards in towns or along gold-rush routes, but some settlers were likely buried on their own in isolated rural areas.⁶⁴⁶ Church services would often have been impossible for many of those who died in the backwoods, as even some established communities relied on travelling priests or missionaries who were in town only once every few weeks.⁶⁴⁷ Overall, however, despite such challenges posed to British conventions by the British Columbian context, and although it remained a difficult emotional experience for families, death did not permeate British understandings of British Columbian life as it did for India.

Condolence letters, distance and togetherness

Family responses to death were filtered through these interpretations of India or British Columbia, while remaining grounded in the practices and ideals of

⁶⁴⁴ For example, BCA, MS-2797, John Brough, poem in afterword to expedition diary; Bilir, *As It Was in the Fifties*, 16; and Thomas Gwallter Price (‘Cuhelyn’) to LL----, 20 March 1862; published in the *Merthyr Telegraph*, 31 May 1862; republished in Conway, ‘Welsh Gold-Miners in British Columbia,’ 54.

⁶⁴⁵ Royce MacGillivray, ‘Cameron, John’ *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 11 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <<http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?BioId=39535>>. Thanks to Mary-Ellen Kelm for calling my attention to this example.

⁶⁴⁶ For business details on Charles Hayward’s British Columbia Funeral Company, see CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, box 1, vol. 3, letter-book. On rural cemeteries in British Columbia, see Mary Philpot, ‘In This Neglected Spot: The Rural Cemetery Landscape in Southern British Columbia’ (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976).

⁶⁴⁷ For one discussion of transient gold-rush church services, see BCA, MS-2112, Evans family, John Evans to children, Antler Creek, 3 May 1872. For more on the work of one missionary, stationed in Hope, see BCA, MS-0369, Alexander Pringle.

Victorian Britain. At the same time, distance and separation shaped the ways in which family members could communicate their mourning, sympathy and support for one another more generally. Although the Victorian good death depended on proximity to family, many could not be together immediately after a death, whether they were separated by vast imperial distances, an English train trip or even just the social etiquette that might prevent more extended family from visiting the bereaved for a set period of time. For these people, letter-writing was the key strategy for offering sympathy and participating in a community of mourning without requiring physical proximity.⁶⁴⁸ For this reason, etiquette manuals framed condolence letters as ‘one of the most sacred duties’ of those who could not offer sympathy in person.⁶⁴⁹

Condolence letters were shaped by a general set of conventions, although individual voices allowed for some variation. Norms and deviations highlighted the challenges of change and separation during a time of death, but they also simultaneously offered families a way to claim forms of connection, however tenuous, against the dual fragmentation of death and physical distance. More specifically, condolence letters enabled relatives to assert claims to family and relationship by iterating shared connections with the dead, and with each other. In the process, this correspondence incorporated the idea of distance into mourning, and resisted familial disintegration by insisting on intimate connections and affective ties that spanned physical space.

One of the most common themes of condolence letters was the inadequacy of words, especially written from a position of physical separation, to convey feelings, comfort and support, and indeed to grasp the meaning of a death at all. Joseph Trutch’s niece, Kate Hyde Ewing, wrote after his wife Julia’s death, ‘There are no words in which to express to you the sympathy we feel. When one can be with a friend in sorrow it is always possible to do something which is an assurance of love and sympathy.’⁶⁵⁰ Franklin Kendall, on the death of his sister, also expressed the unspeakable nature of his grief: ‘I know how you will feel it, and how we all do, but I

⁶⁴⁸ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 307.

⁶⁴⁹ *Chesterfield’s Art of Letter-Writing Simplified: Being a Guide to Friendly, Affectionate, Polite and Business Correspondence* (London, Ont.: W. Bryce, 1886), 46.

⁶⁵⁰ BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 3, file 2, reel A01948, Kate Hyde Ewing to uncle Joseph Trutch, Chicago, 25 July 1895. For other examples in the Trutch family, see BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 3, file 54, reel A01949, Emily (Trutch) Pinder White to brother Joseph Trutch, Folkestone, 15 July 1895; BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 3, file 1, reel A01948, Julia (Hyde) Evans to uncle Joseph Trutch, [?], 21 July 1895; and BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 2, file 23, reel A01948, Grace R. Davey to uncle Joseph Trutch, Datchet, 7 August 1895.

cannot somehow write about [it], although I think a great deal.⁶⁵¹ For families separated in the empire, though, these written words had to be the means of comfort and sympathy that could be expressed and shared across distances.

In grappling with this, relatives explicitly discussed the impact of separation on their grief, making distance not something that just hindered or caused mourning, but a fundamental part of it. When Fanny Buck and Emily Hartt's father died, Buck wrote, 'I know you would feel it so much being away from home and all your own people,' after Hartt told her, 'I only wish I could have been with you. It seems so hard to be so far away at a time like this.' Hartt was thankful, however, that words could shrink distances in at least a fleeting way; letters from her sister, she explained, allowed her to 'picture everything & almost see you all in Father's room.'⁶⁵² Resisting physical distance by evoking other forms of togetherness, Joseph Trutch's sister, Emily White, wrote quite simply, 'So far distant I am with you in spirit,' while for his niece, Grace Davey, both reading and writing letters brought the bad news and her own emotional response 'so much closer.'⁶⁵³ At the same time, letter-writers suggested that it was difficult or impossible to truly comfort one another across such distances, and they sometimes urged the bereaved to move closer to the family, either temporarily or permanently.⁶⁵⁴ In this sense, they framed the condolence letter as both insufficient and indispensable for expressing grief and consolation at a distance.

Most condolence letters referred to Christian faith, memory, and the comforts of time and family in order to provide support. Sometimes accompanied by Bible passages or quotations from hymns, discussions of faith and salvation were repeated so often that they appear almost as stock phrases in family

⁶⁵¹ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 6-8 May 1858.

⁶⁵² BL, Mss Eur F270/4, William Edward Hartt, Fanny Buck to sister Emily Hartt, London 30 May 1884; and Mss Eur F270/1, William Edward Hartt, Emily Hartt to sister Fanny Buck, Rawal Pindi, 10 May 1884.

⁶⁵³ BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 3, file 54, reel A01949, Emily (Trutch) Pinder White to brother Joseph Trutch, Folkestone, 20 July 1895; and BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 2, file 23, reel A01948, Grace R. Davey to uncle Joseph Trutch, Datchet, 7 August 1895.

⁶⁵⁴ BL, Mss Eur C176/162, Henry Beveridge, Maggie Bell to brother Henry Beveridge, Eyemouth, [n.d. 1873, after his first wife Jeanie died]; BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 3, file 8, reel A01948, Caroline (Pinder) Hare to uncle Joseph Trutch, Folkestone, 18 July 1895; BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 2, file 8, reel A01948, Beryl Ashley to uncle Joseph Trutch, Folkestone, 2 August 1895; and BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 2, file 23, reel A01948, Grace R. Davey to uncle Joseph Trutch, Datchet, 7 August 1895.

correspondence.⁶⁵⁵ The dead, these letters suggested, had been released from the pains and worries of the world into heaven—a movement that could not be wholly understood by the living, but for which the dead had been well-prepared through a good life. This was a common feature in condolence letters within Britain, as well as in those that travelled beyond the nation's borders. However, the possibility of family reunion in heaven held special significance for imperial families who experienced separation in life as well as with death. Among these families, a departure to the colonies was sometimes even treated as a first death, as for those intending to settle permanently in British Columbia or for those who feared early death in India this could be the final separation in the world of the living. Such thoughts led to family letters that expressed the hope that they would meet again in heaven or that even reflected the conventions of condolence correspondence as relatives comforted one another following a departure.⁶⁵⁶ As Jane Fawcett wrote to her sisters after arriving in Victoria, 'we shall never see each other on earth, but oh! let your poor loving sister Jane pray you *all* to so live, that she may meet you in Heaven, one unbroken family round the throne of Glory.'⁶⁵⁷

The use of formulaic sentiments in condolence letters could offer reassurance to the bereaved despite—or perhaps because of—their repetition, as the ideas that were supposed to bring comfort, according to wider social conventions, were being associated with the specific death of a loved one. However, such passages did not always reflect the deceased's life, death and relationships with the letter-writer. Individuals responded to disconnects between convention and personal opinion in different ways. Henry Crease, whose relationship with his brother was full of conflict and whose response to his death was anything but generous, still reassured Edward's widow Rebecca in the religious language commonly used by the bereaved: 'It is a comfort to think that he is now at rest, having left this earth in the sure hope of a blessed Resurrection.'⁶⁵⁸ Other family collections more clearly expressed conflict or deviation from convention when the beliefs of the writer or

⁶⁵⁵ For example, BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 6-8 May 1858. On death and Christian belief during the Victorian period, see Michael Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell, and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁶⁵⁶ BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 1, file 4, reel A01947, Elizabeth Trutch to Charlotte Hannah (Barnes) Trutch, [?], 4 August 1849; BL, Mss Eur C176/149, Henry Beveridge, Jemima Beveridge to son Henry Beveridge, Carnock, 17 October 1857; and CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward, folder 3, diary, [on board the *Shannon*], 17 March 1862.

⁶⁵⁷ BCA, MS-1963, Jane Fawcett, reel A01358, Jane Fawcett to sisters, Victoria, 5 October 1863.

⁶⁵⁸ BCA, MS-0055, Crease family, box 1, file 3, Henry Crease to Rebecca Crease, [n.p.], 2 February [n.y.].

reader did not match broader social norms. Sarah Crease worried about her father's atheism as his death approached, urging him to return to the Church, while Phemie Beveridge declared after her sister Maggie died, 'Eternity is in human hearts alone, we will never see each other again. The thought of death brings no consolation[,] it is a sad a terrible human calamity & the grass closes over all our endeavours.'⁶⁵⁹ Some writers felt anxious about what to say in cases when they did not have anything positive or conventional to include about the deceased's life or death. Although ultimately they may have conformed to expectation, like Henry Crease, one letter from Mattie Robinson to her mother indicates that a deeper sense of conflict could underlie such letters. In this case, Robinson wrote home with some anxiety about how to respond to the sister of a man who had died at her station:

I have had such a letter from one of the Miss Walls thanking me so for 'my kindness to her poor Brother'... she asks me to write *myself* & tell them if he 'expressed any religious sentiments and any particulars I can of his death'[,] I *must* write but what *am* I to say[,] he died uttering the most shockingly impious things! and was altogether a very bad character and they think he was so good!⁶⁶⁰

Miss Wall's letter requesting more information about her brother's death was not an unusual tactic for families separated in the empire. Throughout the Victorian period, and especially before the 1880s, relatives emphasised the importance of sharing particular kinds of knowledge that would enable them to produce a communal understanding of a death.⁶⁶¹ Those who could not be with the dying individual might expect to learn exactly how it had happened so as to achieve a realisation of the death and enter a full sense of mourning; in the absence of a shared physical space, in other words, they could produce shared knowledge through which to relate with one another.⁶⁶² However, although Pat Jalland argues that sharing deathbed descriptions was a central part of assuring families that their loved ones had died a good death, correspondence suggests that it could be one of the more difficult or controversial conventions, both for those who were with the dying, and for those at a distance. On the one hand, Clara Robinson reacted to her brother Henry's death

⁶⁵⁹ BCA, MS-0055, Crease family, box 11, file 1, Sarah Crease to father John Lindley, New Westminster, 17 January 1864; and BL, Mss Eur C176/151, Henry Beveridge, Phemie Beveridge to brother Henry Beveridge, Combrie Point, 10 October 1890.

⁶⁶⁰ BL, Mss Eur F142/64, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Mattie Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, [?], 19 December 1860.

⁶⁶¹ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 30.

⁶⁶² For example, BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 2, file 23, reel A01948, Grace R. Davey to uncle Joseph Trutch, Datchet, 18 July 1895.

by writing to Jardy, 'We are looking anxiously for the next mail and your letter which I hope will contain every particular you could learn at Midnapore[.] Remember nothing is too terrible to tell us.'⁶⁶³ On the other hand, after his brother's death, Henry Crease requested that his sister-in-law 'spare yourself & me the painful details of the poor fellows last hours,' arguing, 'It can serve no good purpose to dwell.'⁶⁶⁴

Likewise, those who had been at the deathbed had different reactions to the expectation that they would provide detailed accounts to family members who were far away. Alick Bruce's letters to his sister Jane described in sometimes horrific detail the fatal illness and death of his wife, Lizzy, from early June to early August 1874 in Mussoorie. In an early letter (7 June), he wrote, 'Lizzy remains very very ill... a perfect skeleton no cessation to a dry fever and great thirst. Constant vomiting.' A month later, he reported, 'There appears to be no means of relieving this very severe suffering, and Lizzys yells day & night are heart renching. She, herself prays her end may come.' On 30 July she finally died, which he described in a 9 August letter: 'Poor Lizzy... gradually sank and left us quietly at noon... she *had* to be buried on 31 at 10 am.' He also told Jane, 'Lizzy was kept alive for days by food being injected into her. She could take nothing by the mouth but ice—ice which I got from the Club out here. She was sensible to within 6 hours of her death.'⁶⁶⁵

In contrast to the constant and vivid details of Bruce's letters, Joseph Trutch does not appear to have written to relatives during his wife Julia's final illness, a job instead assigned to his sister, Caroline O'Reilly, and other relatives who were nearby in Victoria. Even after Julia's death, he found it emotionally difficult rather than therapeutic to provide his family with such details. Nearly a month later, he wrote to his brother John, explaining:

I ought to have written to you before but... the fact is that my experience in witnessing the sufferings of my dear wife... so upset me that I have not been fit for anything since... I may not have the courage to [write to their sister Emily]—for I fear I am very weak and foolish.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶³ BL, Mss Eur F142/62, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Clara Robinson to brother Jardy Robinson, Dyrham, 25 June 1862.

⁶⁶⁴ BCA, MS-0055, Crease family, box 1, file 3, Henry Crease to sister-in-law Rebecca Crease, [n.p.], 2 February [n.y.].

⁶⁶⁵ BL, Mss Eur F455/1, Lt.-Col. Alexander Hervey Blackwood Bruce, Alick Bruce to sister Jane Alexander, Mussoorie, letters between 7 June 1874 and 9 August 1874.

⁶⁶⁶ University of British Columbia Special Collections (hereafter UBCSC), Trutch family, box 1, file 58, Joseph Trutch to brother John Trutch, Victoria, 11 August 1895.

In such cases, family members could not rely on letters to provide the knowledge deemed necessary for creating a communal understanding of a specific death.

Instead, they focused on positive memories of the deceased, both specific events and general assessments of character, in order to produce a shared sense of connection between writer, reader and the dead.⁶⁶⁷ In this way, memory was another strategy that enabled families to produce shared epistolary spaces of remembrance and grief that did not depend on proximity in the present. This often relied on new understandings of place that incorporated memories of the deceased, as landscapes were described as imprinted with the presence of the dead and with the grief of the living. After Henry Robinson's death in 1862, his mother wrote that she continually saw his face 'over the Wall opposite this window as he raised himself in the Carriage as he passed to take a *last* (alas!!) look at me in this room where he had left me!'⁶⁶⁸ Meanwhile, his brother Willy longed to return to the family home in Dyrham, in part wanting to be with relatives as they mourned but also wanting to be out of Calcutta, as that city reminded him so much of his brother and thus of his loss: 'Every one is very kind but I am longing to be away & with you all here reminds me so of him, & living here with him only 3 short months ago[.] It is a bitter trial against which I struggle to keep up, but I make a very poor resistance indeed.'⁶⁶⁹ In such cases, certain sites, whether in the metropole or abroad, could become deeply and emotionally linked with those who had died. In fraught and complex ways, then, families invested their memories in places nearby, even (or especially) when the individual had died and was buried far away.

Plotting the family: burial and place

The relationship between mourning and place was a complicated one to negotiate without a shared landscape. As Karen Baptist has recently argued, 'Consolation for the living is sought *in* landscape. Landscape has long provided humans with a physical, sensorial, and ephemeral repository for both grief and for

⁶⁶⁷ For example, BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 2, file 9, reel A01948, Sarah Emily (née Davey) Ashley to uncle Joseph Trutch, Perey Lodge, [n.d.] 1895; and BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family, box 2, file 15, reel A01948, Charlotte E. (née Ashley) Brown to uncle Joseph Trutch, Woodbridge, 1 August 1895.

⁶⁶⁸ BL, F142/56, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Matilda Robinson to son Willy Robinson, Dyrham, 9 November [n.y.].

⁶⁶⁹ BL, F142/55, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Willy Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, Calcutta, 2 June 1862.

the dead.⁶⁷⁰ In Victorian Britain, middle-class families could expect a particular kind of relationship between place and death that might provide some level of comfort and structure to their grief: they would be present at the deathbeds of loved ones, and would witness the deceased's body and its interment. As part of this socially sanctioned grieving process, the grave was imbued with special 'memorial significance,' and families 'were concerned to maintain the plot as a pleasant place of remembrance, planting shrubs, renewing flowers, and keeping it tidy.' Relatives might be expected to visit a grave on the anniversary of the death, if not much more often.⁶⁷¹

For families separated in the late-nineteenth-century empire, the structure, ritual and comfort supposedly offered by physical proximity to death and interment was not possible. In correspondence, intensified grief about a death thus often clustered around discussions of burial. A distant grave was an insistently permanent separation, and the prospect of being buried apart from family could be distressing, especially for those Anglo-Indians who did not see the imperial site as home. To this end, Franklin Kendall declared to his mother, 'I would very much rather die in England than leave my bones in this far off place.'⁶⁷² After a death, relatives expressed difficulty over the question of burial abroad, knowing that they would likely never see or visit the grave. This prevented them from fulfilling duties or expectations to the deceased—not only in preparing the body for burial, but also in commemorating the person through future visits to, and maintenance of, the gravesite. It also took away an important step in the grieving process that enabled them to see and realise the interment and its implications.

Because relatives were unable to locate their grief and work out their responses to a death at a grave, they turned instead to letters as an alternative way of

⁶⁷⁰ Karen Wilson Baptist, 'Diaspora: Death without a Landscape,' *Mortality* 15, 4 (2010): 295.

⁶⁷¹ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 293-94. The cemetery has been identified as the site of family memory and mourning in nineteenth-century British Columbia as well. Colin M. Coates, 'Monuments and Memories: The Evolution of British Columbian Cemeteries, 1850-1950,' *Material History Bulletin* 25 (1987): 11-20. In the English context, see the historical analysis of K. D. M. Snell, 'Gravestones, Belonging and Local Attachment in England 1700-2000,' *Past and Present* 179, 1 (May 2003): 97-134; and the anthropological analysis in Doris Francis, Leonie Kellaher and Georgina Neophytou, 'The Cemetery: A Site for the Construction of Memory, Identity, and Ethnicity,' in *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Jacob Climo and Maria G. Cattell (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 2002), 95-110.

⁶⁷² BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 6-8 May 1858. Similarly, the narrator in Rudyard Kipling's 'A Ballade of Burial' begs not to be buried on the 'blazing' Indian plains where 'I should never rest in peace / I should fret and lie awake' (although the narrator's aim in this case was burial in the Hills). Kipling, 'A Ballade of Burial,' in *Departmental Ditties*, 36. See also Broughton, 'The Bengal Obituary,' 57.

producing and explaining sites of family mourning. Many did whatever they could to learn more about the grave and its surroundings in the cemetery.⁶⁷³ In the case of Henry Robinson's gravesite in Midnapore, his brothers Willy and Jardy were able to visit shortly after his burial as they were stationed nearby, and they relayed details first to one another, and then onward to England:

I went to see his grave the day before yesterday[.] It is in the churchyard under a tree close to the church and between the clergymans house and the church[.] We can have as much ground as we like... but I wont do anything about it till I hear from [?]. He is buried under a tree and the clergyman (a Mr Reeve who comes from our part of the country) promised me that he would take every care of it... Captain Swayne a relation of the Pucklechurch people is Executive Superior and he is going to make a drawing of the church and tomb which I will send you as soon as complete[.] Again a stone cannot be procured here to place over it but must be got in Calcutta but Swayne says he will have it put up properly on its being sent down.⁶⁷⁴

Willy also reported to his mother, 'I have ordered quite a plain tomb stone for his grave, a flat slab of granite to be surrounded with an iron railing, & with the accompanying inscription; I thought you would prefer to have everything quite plain—when all is finished a drawing of it is to be sent to me.'⁶⁷⁵ These letters offered a good description of location and promised detailed drawings of surroundings and the grave itself, in the hopes of allowing distant relatives to envision the site even if they could not visit it.⁶⁷⁶ The brothers emphasised familiarity and comfort, introducing two local helpers as respectable people with connections to the Robinson family circle in Gloucestershire, and who would be able to monitor the site and its care. At the same time, however, these descriptions underscored that this was not a familiar grave: relatives were not there to witness the burial itself, a stone had

⁶⁷³ BL, Mss Eur F142/62, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Clara Robinson to brother Jardy Robinson, Dyrham, 25 June 1862; and BL, Mss Eur F270/5, William Edward Hartt, Fanny Buck to brother-in-law William Hartt, 1 May [n.y.]. Information and materials from a gravesite could travel outward from Britain as well; Maggie Bell sent her brother Henry Beveridge a flower from their mother's grave, and noted in two letters that they had managed to fit her name onto the same stone as their father's. BL, Mss Eur C176/162, Henry Beveridge, Maggie Bell to sister-in-law Annette Beveridge, Torryburn, 2 September 1885; and BL, Mss Eur C176/162, Henry Beveridge, Maggie Bell to brother Henry Beveridge, Torryburn, 12 May 1886.

⁶⁷⁴ BL, Mss Eur F142/61, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Jardy Robinson to brother Willy Robinson, Midnapore, 15 May 1862.

⁶⁷⁵ BL, Mss Eur F142/55, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Willy Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, Calcutta, 2 June 1862. They included the grave's inscription in letters as well. BL, Mss Eur F142/59 and Mss Eur 142/60, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, torn scraps.

⁶⁷⁶ Jalland notes that some relatives sent photographs of the grave if they were able to attend the funeral. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 295.

to be brought from elsewhere, the family would not be there to erect it, and the task of maintenance and care remained ultimately in the hands of strangers.

For families who did not have siblings or other relations near the site of burial, these issues were of even more concern. Mattie Robinson's letter from the Wall family requested information not only about their relative's death but also about his grave. His sister even gave Robinson instructions to follow with respect to the gravesite. Robinson then reported to her mother, with some frustration, about what she saw as unreasonable expectations for an Indian burial—'She [the sister of the dead man] wants a soldier to plant a tree on his grave (as if it would grow if he did without constant irrigation!)'—but she also noted that the father hoped to have 'a sketch of the church yard[,] it would be such a comfort.' This Robinson was willing to do for the family, though she did worry about the importance of quality and accuracy in such an undertaking: 'they wont care about the execution of the drawing not being good, if it is like the place, will they?'⁶⁷⁷

Drawings of a gravesite and its surroundings did not completely alleviate a family's struggle with distance in times of death and in relation to burial. Although most letter-writers expressed some level of belief or hope in reunion after death, there continued to be particular grief about being buried separately from one another instead of together in a family plot. Margaret Percy asked her brother, Cuthbert Davidson, to visit the grave of her first husband, Robert Grant, in Bombay before he left India, mourning that 'We shall all be scattered far & wide here below[,] May we meet in Heaven,' and wondering where she herself would be buried.⁶⁷⁸ Some families developed an epitaphic evocation of family connection across physical distance and separation in burial. David Arnold describes the 'constellations of widely scattered places' that can be traced in parish churches all over Britain, where families and congregations erected memorial plaques in the absence of actual bodies when members died abroad. This 'imaginative geography,' he argues, unites places in 'promiscuous association: the remoteness and exoticism of a global empire is brought home to the intimacy of the parish church.'⁶⁷⁹ This geography of imperial memorialisation not only evoked connection between distant and different places,

⁶⁷⁷ BL, Mss Eur F142/64, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Mattie Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, [?], 19 December 1860.

⁶⁷⁸ BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady Margaret (Joseceline) Percy to brother Cuthbert Davidson, London, 3 August 1862; enclosed in letter from Lady Margaret (Joseceline) Percy to son Charles Grant, London, 10 February 1867.

⁶⁷⁹ Arnold, 'Deathscapes,' 339.

but it also did so between people—between those who died abroad and those who remembered them in Britain, where they could be given a place even without a body.

In a similar tactic, some families inscribed tombstones with the names of those who were buried elsewhere, indicating connection and togetherness in spirit if not in body. The Trutch-O'Reilly family plot in Ross Bay Cemetery, Victoria, is one such example. The grave contains Charlotte Trutch, her daughter-in-law Julia Trutch, her son-in-law Peter O'Reilly, and her granddaughter Mary O'Reilly. The headstone also notes that Julia's husband, Joseph, was buried in Lydeard St. Lawrence, Somerset, and Peter's wife, Caroline, was buried in Cheriton, Kent. Of the first two generations of Trutches in British Columbia, then, the Victoria plot contains the bodies of Charlotte (born in Jamaica), her daughter-in-law Julia (born in the United States) and her son-in-law Peter (born in England and raised in Ireland). Their spouses are buried in England, separated in death but marked together in name [*see Figures 1 and 2*].



Figure 1: The Trutch-O'Reilly family grave, Ross Bay Cemetery, Victoria, British Columbia.
Photo by the author, 2009.



Figure 2: Detail of inscription on the Trutch-O'Reilly family grave, noting Joseph William Trutch's 1904 burial at Lydeard St. Lawrence, Somerset, England.

Photo by the author, 2009.

A changing family, a changing home

The question of place and separation was not only a struggle for families when relatives died in the empire. Those in British Columbia and India also had to grapple with the idea of changing circles of loved ones in Britain, as the 'home' of their imagination and memory shifted and disappeared in their absence. In response to these concerns, letter-writers sought to account for changes in the metropole, reworking relationships and memories in order to incorporate deaths into their understanding of the family.

Letters from Britain bearing news of a death tried to explain its impact of changes on the family circle in the metropole. In February 1879, for example, Alben Hawkins' brother Henry updated him on several deaths since their last correspondence, reminding him 'there is not many Brothers and sisters here now.'⁶⁸⁰ Relatives responded to such news by explicitly discussing their difficulty in imagining a changed home. In cases when they expected to return to Britain, their letters anticipated a second blow, as they would re-experience the loss and grief of a death

⁶⁸⁰ BCA, MS-0441, Alben Hawkins, box 1, file 2, Henry Hawkins to brother Alben Hawkins, Tottenham, 16 February 1879.

even if it had occurred years before. To this end, Mary Moody wrote after one death, 'I can't fancy my home without her, what a change I sh[ould] see when we do return!' while George White, in typical language of the time, 'dread[ed] the blank that I shall find at home.'⁶⁸¹ Even the death of pets could act as a reminder of changing homes and families, as evidenced by the Beveridge family letters following the death of their dog Pindar in 1865.⁶⁸²

In order to offer support and re-confirm relationships following a death, relatives used letters to remind each other of continuing or changing responsibilities to the family circle, both in proximity and from afar. The Robinson family correspondence provides several examples of this. When a sibling died, the remaining siblings wrote to one another with instructions and encouragement for re-working relationships with their parents by 'filling the gaps' in the family. Clara Robinson wrote to her brother Jardy nearly three months after Henry's death, describing how much their parents were suffering from the loss: 'this has been a terribly trying summer for them but they have borne their great trial so beautifully. All we can do is to... try & fill the gaps & do our duty as nobly as he did his!' Similarly, Willy Robinson declared, 'we must close up the gap & stand closer now that Henry has gone,' while instructing his brother John, who had been on leave in England at the time of Henry's death, 'You must do your best to comfort our Father & Mother under this dreadful calamity until I get home.' He himself hoped to 'compensate' to a degree for the loss by turning to Dyrham as soon as possible. 'Filling the gaps' in the family was a difficult enterprise at a distance, as Willy's determination to 'stand closer' after Henry's death depended on this trip back to England. Jardy urged him, 'You *must go home* and be a comfort to them.'⁶⁸³ In other cases, the Robinson siblings turned to a tougher approach when dealing with deaths

⁶⁸¹ BCA, MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody, Mary Moody to mother Mary Hawks, New Westminster, 28 June 1860; and BL, Mss Eur F108/97, Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, George White to sister Jane, Jullundur, 29 March 1870.

⁶⁸² BL, Mss Eur C176/149, Henry Beveridge, Jemima Beveridge to son Henry Beveridge, Culross, 9 March 1865; BL, Mss Eur C176/149, Henry Beveridge, Jemima Beveridge to son Allie Beveridge, Culross, 28 March 1865; and BL, Mss Eur C176/148, Henry Beveridge, Henry Beveridge to mother Jemima Beveridge, Cooch Behar, 30 April 1865. Henry particularly struggled to comprehend the passage of time that Pindar's death implied, writing 'I cant realise that he should have died of old age. I forget to add in the seven years since I saw him.'

⁶⁸³ BL, Mss Eur F142/62, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Clara Robinson to brother Jardy Robinson, Dyrham, 7 August 1862; BL, Mss Eur F142/55, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Willy Robinson to brother John Robinson, [?], 12 May 1862; BL, Mss Eur F142/55, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Willy Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, Calcutta, 2 June 1862; and BL, Mss Eur F142/61, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Jardy Robinson to brother Willy Robinson, Midnapore, 15 May 1862.

in their ranks. Henry responded to his sister Annie's death by calling on his mother to care for the other siblings rather than losing herself in grief: 'you have more children than one and... they require your care & attention *& they ought to occupy your thoughts more* than the one whom God has taken into his own keeping.' As for mourning, he expected it to have a time limit (one approximately covered by the time lag in correspondence between Britain and India), writing, 'if when you get this you have not *entirely recovered* your *accustomed spirits* you must set to work and do so at once.'⁶⁸⁴

The definition of family responsibilities and affections after a death was complicated by distance in other ways as well. Matilda Robinson acknowledged after Annie's death that some of her sons did not know their sister very well. Willy and John had both left to posts in India when Annie was still a young child, and thus lacked the close relationships that she had with the younger siblings. Matilda wrote to Willy, 'You only recollect our precious Annie as a child & tho' I know you will feel for us & in some degree with us yet it will not be to you what it will be to Henry & Jardy.' John too, she mourned, 'will never know her.' In contrast, she described how sharp the grief was for the siblings living in Dyrham, who had seen Annie as a 'companion' and 'a fond second Mamma.'⁶⁸⁵ In this case, the long separations of family between Britain and India necessarily changed the dynamics of family mourning by excluding the older siblings from the same depth of grief experienced by others in the family circle.

Overall, letter-writers in the colonies expressed discomfort with the idea that home and family changed in their absence. A death could bring this concern into sharp relief, as it was an irrefutable and irreversible reminder that the family circle was changing, sometimes dramatically, in ways that they could not fully realise or understand from afar. Correspondence offered an invaluable but inadequate tool for dealing with these issues, as individuals tried to produce an understanding of home that incorporated distant relatives and accounted for the changes wrought by a death. Without such letters, these changes could go unmarked and unrecognised. Maurice Bellis, for example, only wrote to his mother after he moved to British Columbia, so when she died, he lost touch with the rest of his family. His friend Tommy Norbury

⁶⁸⁴ BL, Mss Eur F142/59, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Henry Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, [?], 1 May 1859.

⁶⁸⁵ BL, Mss Eur F142/56, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Matilda Robinson to son Willy Robinson, Dyrham, 24 March 1859.

explained that when Bellis returned to England ten years later, hoping to ‘make amends,’ he found ‘at one blow that most of his relations are dead.’⁶⁸⁶ Without letters, in other words, family relationships could not be continually updated and adapted to changing conditions.

Wills, inheritance and conflict

Family responses to death—whether in the metropole or in distant imperial sites—were not confined to grief, condolence and emotion, but were also intimately entangled with questions of family business, finances and inheritance. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, legal wills were generally short documents concerned only with the distribution of property.⁶⁸⁷ These were largely the purview of men, with married women unable to make formal wills before the passage of the Married Women’s Property Acts of 1870 and 1882. In cases when they could not, or chose not to leave wills, women could write informal documents and bequests, often with longer personal explanations and more attention to commemorative items of emotional significance rather than solely property of financial worth.⁶⁸⁸ Wills and other bequests worked to ‘enclose’ the family circle, defining legitimacy and relationship, and delineating responsibilities to one another. In this way, the place of inheritance in responses to death in the British Empire reflected a critical negotiation of the meanings and boundaries of family at a distance.⁶⁸⁹

For separated families, correspondence played an important role in navigating issues of inheritance. Through letters, relatives sought to undertake the business of family estates and, in the process, suggested ways in which they might relate to one another in the future. Sometimes simple instructions, certificates of death and other details were exchanged with little apparent difficulty or discord.⁶⁹⁰ More often, however, the question of estates arose in correspondence when a potential for conflict or complication was perceived, even if it was only a situation in

⁶⁸⁶ BCA, MS-0877, Tommy Norbury, box 1, file 11, Tommy Norbury to mother, Fort Steele, 17 May 1896.

⁶⁸⁷ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 224.

⁶⁸⁸ Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, 225 and 295. For example, BL, Mss Eur C176/162, Henry Beveridge, Maggie Bell to brothers David, Allie and Henry Beveridge, Rosehill, 22 April 1889, with will enclosed.

⁶⁸⁹ Morris, *Men, Women and Property*, 100; and Finn, ‘Family Formations,’ 111. Disinheriting a relative was a powerful way of expressing conflict and discontent with the nature of a relationship. For one example, see BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady (Margaret) Josceline Percy to son Charles and daughter-in-law Ellen Grant, London, 5 November 1875.

⁶⁹⁰ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 16 May 1858; and CVA, PR-24, John Barnsley, file 1, John Barnsley to father, Victoria, 20 April 1887.

which one relative might feel left out of the process if they were not kept updated. The settlement of debts, the distribution of life insurance money and the care of children were also concerns for separated families, the latter particularly for widower fathers left with young children in India's apparently unhealthy environment.

One common form of complication arose in situations when an individual died abroad with little or no family nearby. In these cases, it fell to an unrelated acquaintance to deal with the immediate business of reporting the death, finding the will and doing the initial work of meeting its stipulations. Letters to and within the bereaved family outlined the actions taken by these individuals in order to explain the situation to those who were unfamiliar with the general process or the specific contents of a will. When Alick Bruce died in Galle on his way to England, for example, the attending doctor followed his instructions to sell everything except 'his desk, watch, ring & sword,' which he sent back to Calcutta to Bruce's brother-in-law, Phillip MacKinnon. These items arrived accompanied with an account book and other items, including the original will and instructions apparently dictated by Bruce to the doctor. The arrival of the will officially allowed Phillip to act as Executor, although the Calcutta courts were closed at the time so the process was delayed further. Julia MacKinnon, Bruce's mother-in-law in Calcutta, kept Jane, Bruce's sister in England, informed of all of these developments as Phillip dealt with the estate.⁶⁹¹

In other cases, family members were unable to sort out inheritance arrangements on their own, even though they were nearby. Missing or unmade wills were a regular problem arising in family correspondence following a death, particularly for those who died young or who lived mobile lives. Henry Robinson's 1862 death in Midnapore was a typical example. Although reminded to do so by his brothers, Henry apparently never wrote a will, or at least one that could be found after his death. As a result, as Willy reported to the Robinson family in Dyrham, Henry's estate had to go through the Administrator General and would not be closed for a year.⁶⁹² Willy and Jarly were thus only able to obtain items that would not be included in the estate or claimed by anyone else. As Jarly promised, 'everything I can

⁶⁹¹ BL, Mss Eur F455/5, Lt.-Col. Alexander Hervey Blackwood Bruce, Julia MacKinnon to Jane Alexander, Mussoorie, 7 January 1875; BL, Mss Eur F455/5, Lt.-Col. Alexander Hervey Blackwood Bruce, Julia MacKinnon to Jane Alexander, Mussoorie, 14 January 1875; and BL, Mss Eur F455/5, Lt.-Col. Alexander Hervey Blackwood Bruce, Julia MacKinnon to Jane Alexander, the Doon, 5 March 1876.

⁶⁹² BL, Mss Eur F142/55, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Willy Robinson to mother Matilda Robinson, Calcutta, 2 June 1862.

keep out of the A. G.'s hands I will.⁶⁹³ Because Willy was only a week from departing for England when Henry died, he took these items with him; they included personal letters, books with Henry's name in them, pictures, watches, a pencil case, Bibles and whatever else Jardy thought 'they might like at home.'⁶⁹⁴ In this case, none of the Robinsons apparently argued with one another over the little that they could recover of Henry's belongings, but instead used correspondence to explain and endure the complications of formal intestate procedures.

For some families, correspondence helped with decisions about how to deal with items that were not included in formal wills or arrangements. After Emily Hartt died in India, her sister Fanny helped her widower William decide what to do with her clothing and other belongings:

I thought at first it would only distress me to see any of them but I have talked it over with my sisters & friends and they think I better leave it to you to choose what to bring[.] I would give all to the poor that would be useful & I would like you to give Mrs Blackburn her choise of one or two dresses Schawls will do for her child or you may like to keep, her cloaks I think you might bring, and in one of her... letters she tells me she but [*sic*] I will enclose that part of her letter so that you can see what she said[.] If you settle in England in a few years you will like to have her things that she liked so much about you, but you should keep all useful things for your own comfort in India and when you leave for good bring them with you.

Besides the clothing, Fanny mentioned 'a few little matters that you and I must settle when you come over about furniture pictures &c that only concern you and myself and can easily be arranged.' Otherwise, she left legal negotiations to the family lawyer who, she wrote, 'I am sure you may trust to do what is right.' In addition, she informed William that her brother Joseph would be able to 'explain our business affairs better than I can do,' and she had only 'told them [Joseph and the lawyer] what I think dear Emily would like done and if you approve of what they offer everything can be settled in a very short time.'⁶⁹⁵

It is unclear what these specific legal negotiations concerned, but it is possible that the family was investigating options for how to raise William and Emily's baby after her death. While Anglo-Indian families were always very

⁶⁹³ BL, Mss Eur F142/61, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Jardy Robinson to brother Willy Robinson, Midnapore, 15 May 1862.

⁶⁹⁴ BL, Mss Eur F142/61, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, Jardy Robinson to brother Willy Robinson, Midnapore, 15 May 1862.

⁶⁹⁵ BL, Mss Eur F270/5, William Edward Hartt, Fanny Buck to brother-in-law William Hartt, London, 1 May [n.y.].

concerned about the dangers of raising children in India, these worries intensified on the death of a young mother. Franklin Kendall expressed some thankfulness after his sister died that ‘the little baby died when it did, as had it outlived its mother, it could not have been well cared for in India, with no motherly eye to watch over it.’⁶⁹⁶ Emily Hartt’s child had outlived her, however, and immediately after her death, William began discussing the possibility of sending her to live with Fanny, who offered to care for her in London.⁶⁹⁷ Although concerns about the health, well-being and proper upbringing of children were particularly heated in relation to India, these were not solely Anglo-Indian worries. After Marian Newcombe’s death after childbirth in Victoria in 1891, for example, her widower Charles sent his three eldest children to live with relatives in England.⁶⁹⁸

Some families did not need to negotiate issues like childcare or even the distribution of commemorative bequests and clothing after a death, but letter-writers still sought to explain how an estate was being settled in order to keep distant relatives informed of how the arrangements would affect them. After Jemima Beveridge died in early 1885, Maggie undertook to explain to Henry ‘how things stand as to that weary-world subject—money.’⁶⁹⁹ Most of their mother’s money had been left to their brother David, who had ‘never established himself in any paying career.’⁷⁰⁰ Herself already left with an income from her deceased husband, Maggie turned over her share of the inheritance to David as well, leaving the estate split between him and Phemie, the two siblings without money from other sources. Maggie explained to Henry that she had done this because:

I thought he would feel then *independent* & that of his own free will he would say to you that he no longer would require your most kind allowance. I *do not know* if he will do this. I only thought it my duty to give you this plain statement. Oh, if we could do without being a burden on you & Allie, how glad I sh[ou]ld be!⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁶ BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 6-8 May 1858.

⁶⁹⁷ BL, Mss Eur F270/5, William Edward Hartt, Fanny Buck to brother-in-law William Hartt, London, 1 May [n.y.].

⁶⁹⁸ Kevin Neary, ‘Newcombe, Charles Frederic,’ *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 15 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=8309>; and BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe family, including vol. 18, file 22, John H. Dixon to C. F. Newcombe, Inveran, 28 February 1891 and 30 September 1891.

⁶⁹⁹ BL, Mss Eur C176/165, Henry Beveridge, Maggie Bell to brother Henry Beveridge, Torryburn, 26 March 1885.

⁷⁰⁰ Beveridge, *India Called Them*, 25.

⁷⁰¹ BL, Mss Eur C176/165, Henry Beveridge, Maggie Bell to brother Henry Beveridge, Torryburn, 26 March 1885.

There appears to have been no suggestion that Henry would have expected to receive anything after his mother's death—instead, it seems that they all expected that her property was destined for the siblings without incomes, whom Henry had already been supporting for years—but this letter does indicate that Maggie sought to explain how the settlements might impact or include him indirectly.⁷⁰²

Finally, tension and conflict did sometimes boil over into open hostility after a death as individuals tried to deal with financial concerns, emotional distress and in some cases estranged relatives. The death of Henry Crease's brother, Edward, is one of the only times that we see clearly the level of conflict in his family, particularly respecting financial arrangements. By the time Edward died, Henry was a prominent member of Victoria's society as a judge, a politician and the Attorney General for British Columbia. However, he was also constantly pushed for financial support by his younger siblings in Europe. He had previously argued with his sisters over their mother's property when they had sold items that he had wanted before he was able to claim them. Edward's landlady in Birmingham had also begun to request money from Henry that had not been paid to her by his brother.⁷⁰³ Upon hearing of Edward's death, Henry responded curtly and firmly to his sister-in-law, Rebecca:

I duly rec^d yr letter of the 11th ultimate confirming the Rev^d Mr Wardroper's cablegram of the 10th announcing my brother Edward's death and thereupon remitted by cable £12 to Mr. W. to meet the expenses of the funeral... Before closing a correspondence, which only arose under the recent distressing circumstances, I think it right to tell you, that I am not in a position to extend to you any further assistance... I am bound not to disguise from you the fact that you must not look to *me* for anything more.⁷⁰⁴

Other letters sought to deflect potential or more minor conflict. Fanny Buck, when explaining their father's will to her sister Emily, commented, 'I dont think Father's will is altogether fine to the rest of them,' but reassured her, 'I am sure he liked us all the same.'⁷⁰⁵ In such discussions, family letters indicate an awareness that financial concerns or personal bequests could be heated sources of conflict or anxiety for the

⁷⁰² For another example, see Margaret Percy's explanation of an update to her 1829 will. BL, Mss Eur E308/55, Sir Robert Grant, Lady (Margaret) Josceline Percy to son Charles Grant, London, 24 December 1869.

⁷⁰³ Gordon R. Elliott, 'Henry P. Pellew Crease: Confederation or No Confederation,' *BC Studies* 12 (Winter 1971-1972): 70-71.

⁷⁰⁴ BCA, MS-0055, Crease family, box 1, file 3, Henry Crease to sister-in-law Rebecca Crease, [n.p.], 2 February [n.y.].

⁷⁰⁵ BL, Mss Eur F270/4, William Edward Hartt, Fanny Buck to sister Emily Hartt, fragment [24 December 1884?].

bereaved. Letter-writers tried to shape, deflect or negotiate the terms of such tension by openly discussing wills, inheritance and estates, asking for advice, or simply explaining the details of a situation to those far away.

Conclusions

Correspondence about death formed part of the wider family practice of letter-writing in the British Empire, addressing broad concerns with distance, separation and imperial places. At the same time, these letters were also a distinct kind of correspondence. While discussions of food or dress appear intermingled with other topics in family letters without established tone, content or form, the subject of death was often more institutionalised, separate and subject to epistolary convention. The correspondence produced after a death was written on mourning paper: black-edged paper and envelopes that signalled death and grief even before the words needed to be read. Even when the letters were not specifically about a death—mourning paper could be used for months afterward—the paper itself was a constant and visible marker of the parameters of family grief. In their content and style, condolence letters were characterised by standard forms, offering phrases and sentiments that connected individual losses to a wider cultural system of dealing with loss. At the same time, all discussions about death suggest that this was a critical moment for separated relatives to navigate the challenges and possibilities of distance and in family life. In their content, form and symbolism, letters helped families to express condolence, understand a distant grave, come to terms with changing relationships and navigate the business of inheritance following a death.

Letter-writers were able to do this through their treatment of distance and space in relation to family deaths. The euphemisms used to describe death in the Victorian period underscored the ways in which it was imagined as a kind of migration or movement from place to place, and from state to state.⁷⁰⁶ However, the places of the living were also important in the process of understanding and coming to terms with death. Death could give families a sense of place and belonging in a distant site of empire where a loved one's body lay, but it could also brew hostility, resentment or fear toward the place. The nature of death and burial in specific sites

⁷⁰⁶ For example, the use of 'called away,' in BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60/2, Franklin Richardson Kendall, Franklin Kendall to mother, Bombay, 6-8 May 1858. For more on Victorian euphemisms for death, see Eliecer Crespo Fernández, 'The Language of Death: Euphemism and Conceptual Metaphorization in Victorian Obituaries,' *SKY Journal of Linguistics* 19 (2006): 101-30.

also shaped family responses to them, particularly in India where British anxieties about perceived dangers and an absence of 'home' were especially concentrated. In this sense, deaths could mark the empire both as a place for family and as a threat to it, but in either case, death and burial inscribed an imperial place with personal, emotional meaning.

More broadly, for those living in physical separation, family mourning could not depend on proximity to define its bonds and boundaries. Correspondence about death played a key role in remaking and evoking ties within the family for those who lacked other ways of communicating grief, comfort and connection. Dealing with all aspects of death from condolence and changing families to burials and inheritance, relatives used letters both to resist and to incorporate the idea of distance into mourning. Writing enabled individuals to participate in family grief and to claim family connection in times of death, as letters suggested the possibility of cohesion for a fragmented family at a time of further fragmentation. Relatives who did not write to one another may have individually marked death, grief and loss in their own ways, but they could not participate in this kind of family mourning or emotional community. Even for those who did write, however, senses of togetherness remained tenuous, and correspondence about death could also underscore tensions and conflicts within the family. Finances, wills and the care of children could be particularly sensitive topics, but all letters contained implicit reminders of disruption and distance. Overall, then, family letters about death produced and reflected forms of grief and relationship that were shaped by distance and place, offering both reminders of separation and strategies for claiming connection across imperial spaces in a time of emotional rupture and family change.

Conclusion

In June 1890, Conservative MP John Henniker Heaton published an impassioned plea for postal reform in the British Empire. Reliable, efficient and affordable postal connections between Britain and its colonies were essential for cultivating imperial unity, he argued, while high rates and poor services would have a ‘dissolvent effect on the Empire.’⁷⁰⁷ ‘They [postal services] have become part of our daily life,’ he wrote, ‘and our private, national, and imperial business is altogether dependent on their efficiency.’⁷⁰⁸ According to Heaton, correspondence was critical for the political administration and the management of trade between the scattered outposts of the late-nineteenth-century empire. However, he was also insistent that letters were significant for the deeply personal role that they played in the lives of the ‘millions of families that are now physically divided, one member from another, until death.’⁷⁰⁹ Letter-writing helped to minimise ‘the evils and sorrows attendant on the breaking up of the home-circle,’ he argued, for the ‘men and women... separated for life from members of their families who have emigrated to the colonies, in order to increase the power and wealth of the Empire, and to create new markets for our goods.’⁷¹⁰ In other words, Heaton suggested, the British Empire was enabled in some respects by the passage of family correspondence. Divided families relied on letters to maintain relationships with one another, and in so doing, they were able to sustain physical separations in the service of empire, whether those were due to the work of colonial administration, military service, trade or settlement.

When Heaton put forth this argument at the end of the nineteenth century, he was acknowledging a point that underpinned the family letters already traversing imperial distances: writing was a key practice of the British Empire. In the operation of imperial politics, trade, war, charity, research and settlement, as well as in the public imaginings of empire in the metropole, paper and ink made the British Empire work. As a number of historians have shown, writing of all kinds—travel writing, the press, missionary reports, histories, company documents, memoirs and

⁷⁰⁷ Heaton, ‘Penny Post for the Empire,’ 917.

⁷⁰⁸ Heaton, ‘Penny Post for the Empire,’ 920.

⁷⁰⁹ Heaton, ‘Penny Post for the Empire,’ 918.

⁷¹⁰ Heaton, ‘Penny Post for the Empire,’ 918 and 911.

others—worked to produce and configure particular forms of knowledge, power, connection and relationship in and between imperial places.⁷¹¹ In this sense, as Miles Ogborn has argued, writing was ‘not simply a commentary upon what happened,’ but was instead ‘very much a part of the action.’⁷¹² This thesis has taken up this point, aiming to explore the ways in which family and empire were connected and given meaning through one another in the practice, content and form of personal correspondence. More specifically, I have undertaken close readings of archived correspondence from broadly middle-class British families involved in British Columbia or India between 1858 and 1901. I have argued that such letters worked to make imperial lives possible, sustainable and meaningful.

The late-nineteenth-century British Empire was a global but geographically fragmented collection of sites that were separated by vast distances. In order to make such an empire work, Britons needed ways of producing knowledge, connection and relationship between far-flung and very different places, and between the people who lived in them. While this occurred in a range of ways, I have argued here that family correspondence played a significant role in the process. The operation of the British Empire relied on the widely scattered and often peripatetic careers of administrators, merchants, soldiers, missionaries and settlers;⁷¹³ their lives and work, in turn, often depended on personal separations from family. Although some of these people cut ties with relatives in the course of their imperial movements, for many others, letter-writing became an important strategy for coming to terms with the meanings of separated family and imperial places.

Whether self-consciously or not, it is in these letters that relatives on both ends of a correspondence articulated—indeed, produced—understandings of the British Empire, and of their place within it. In correspondence, Britons worked to refract wider questions of imperial rule, knowledge, place, identity and belonging through the affections, obligations and anxieties of personal relationships. In so

⁷¹¹ See, for example, Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992); Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Julie F. Codell, ed., *Imperial Co-Histories: National Identities and the British and Colonial Press* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003); Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Simon J. Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System, 1876-1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Hall, ‘At Home with History’; Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Elizabeth Vibert, ‘Writing “Home”: Sibling Intimacy and Mobility in a Scottish Colonial Memoir,’ in Ballantyne and Burton, *Moving Subjects*, 67-88; and Finn, ‘Anglo-Indian Lives’.

⁷¹² Ogborn, *Indian Ink*, 26.

⁷¹³ See Lambert and Lester, *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire*.

doing, they made broad and abstract issues of empire palatable, understandable and applicable on a personal scale, yet a scale that was widely encountered by Britons both in the metropole and abroad in the empire. In this sense, the importance ascribed to such letters—their content, their symbolism and their function for separated families—challenges the arguments of historians who maintain that the British Empire was not lived ‘at home’ in significant or commonly experienced ways.⁷¹⁴ These letters formed a key and deeply valued path through which Britons in the metropole, as well as in the colonies, came to know and understand the empire. At the same time, this correspondence also constituted a performance of family at a distance, providing the medium through which relatives could maintain and rework relationships in relation to the imperial places in which they found themselves. Overall, I have argued, by making personal separations thinkable and sustainable, by reworking family relationships in relation to imperial distances and places, and by forming a common route by which colonial knowledge was produced and transmitted, this correspondence positioned the family as a key building block of empire.

My attention to family correspondence helps to complicate any sense of the British Empire as a unified and abstract project of caricatured ‘colonisers’ with singular aims to dominate, rule, extract and settle. A sustained focus on personal letters offers instead a fractured, anxious and complicated history of empire written in individual voices and everyday concerns. In this sense, I have aimed to explore the ‘dispositions’ of those people who were empowered by particular imperial formations, focusing on the relationships of middle- and upper-class families, especially those who were influential in some way in British Columbia or India.⁷¹⁵ In order to understand how these people learned to live as members of the colonial elite (defined broadly, especially for British Columbia) in these specific contexts, I have examined the ways in which they explained their imperial lives through the mundane language of everyday experience and personal relationship. Overall, this approach has demonstrated that the British Empire could be lived and given meaning not only in grand ‘events’ and abstract policies, but also as a banal and unremarkable feature of life for middle-class families both ‘at home’ and abroad.

⁷¹⁴ For example, Porter, *Absent-Minded Imperialists*.

⁷¹⁵ On analysing the ‘dispositions’ of colonisers, see Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 237–38 and 253.

In making this argument, I have structured the thesis around four overlapping but distinct themes of correspondence, each of which has offered a different perspective onto the relationship between family, empire and place through the medium of letter-writing. In Chapter 2, I sought to understand correspondence both as source and as subject of my analysis, asking what role the materials, conventions and ideas of letter-writing played in linking distant imperial sites through the family. Although the postal systems and material experiences of mail differed in each place, I suggested that letters reflected broadly shared conventions that characterised middle-class British epistolary practice. At the same time, these letters also responded to the perceived threats to family relationships posed by imperial disjuncture, difference and distance; correspondents sought to evoke connections in the face of such challenges by explicitly discussing the place of letter-writing in reshaping understandings of imperial space, the passage of time, and the performance of familial duty.

While this process tended to work in roughly comparable ways across the empire, the significance of specific sites became more clear when I examined other topics of correspondence. Epistolary discussions of food (Chapter 3) and dress (Chapter 4), for example, demonstrated the importance of place in shaping and entangling understandings of family and empire. The topic of food resonated with particular urgency in British Columbian correspondence, while dress and appearance were invested with great significance in the Anglo-Indian context. This is a pattern that I argued was grounded in the specifics of each site, as food and dress gave Britons an outlet for articulating and examining their particular experiences, needs, anxieties and impressions in British Columbia and India, respectively. In the process, these letters facilitated the production of local imperial knowledge that could be compared, connected and transmitted to family members in the metropole. At the same time, I argued, new experiences with food and dress also impacted the ways in which family relationships were understood and performed in relation to each place.

The final chapter (Chapter 5) turned from discussions of everyday experiences to epistolary responses to exceptional moments in family lives. In death, I suggested, the patterns of family correspondence were both amplified and changed. Family letters about death pushed for an urgent and emotional renegotiation of relationships between individuals and between places, as relatives sought to claim connections in the face of both distance and death. Correspondence followed

broadly shared British conventions of mourning and condolence letter-writing, although expressions of grief were also inflected with understandings of death and burial that were specific to each site. In all of these ways, I argued, letters about death reshaped understandings of place and distance; confirmed and reworked the meanings of relationships; and contributed to a wider family negotiation of life, death, distance and togetherness in the British Empire.

This structure has suggested that family relationships underpinned, reflected and produced imperial places in ways that were site-specific, and in ways that were more widely shared across different places in the British Empire. In this way, the thesis has aimed to provide both a detailed and a wide-ranging picture of British imperialism in the late nineteenth century. More specifically, through a multi-sited and comparative study of Anglo-Indian and British Columbian families, the thesis has interrogated the importance of, and interaction between, local contexts and trans-imperial networks in shaping connections between imperial places, and especially between metropole and colony. By considering the role of family correspondence in linking Britain with these two very different sites—one, an anxious colony of rule at the heart of the imperial project, and the other, a comparatively unknown settler colony on the geographical and imagined ‘edge’ of empire—I have asked what, if anything, held together such places in the British Empire.

A study of family correspondence necessarily emphasises the interconnected nature of the empire, as letters moved between imperial places and, in the process, forged links of materials, information, conventions, affections and obligations between people living in those places. In this sense, the thesis builds on the existing literature on colonial networks and connections by framing British Columbia and India not as self-contained and discrete sites, but rather as open-ended, given meaning through their interactions with places beyond their borders as they operated within a partially shared British world.

However, the families and correspondence studied in this thesis were also deeply grounded in the specifics of individual places, and the differences in expectations and experiences in British Columbia or India mattered in the ways in which letter-writers negotiated relationships with family and empire. Chapter 4, for example, has indicated that visual demarcations of difference in terms of both class and race were invested with great significance and anxiety for Anglo-Indians, while

discussions of food, dress and death (Chapters 3-5) reflected particular familial configurations of broader concerns with the Indian climate, disease, bodies and race. In contrast, British Columbian families worried more about the impact of homosocial and backwoods society, a 'wild' environment, and in the case of permanent settlers, lifelong separations from relatives. Here, the British presence was less threatened by violence and disease, and was more intent on expanding the social, political, economic and cultural trappings of a settler society. Changing food practices particularly represented challenges to this process (Chapter 3), while concerns about letter-writing, dress and death were less heated and generally less place-specific in British Columbian letters (Chapters 2, 4 and 5).

By highlighting the broadly shared and the locally specific forms of family communication associated with two very different kinds of imperial sites, the thesis has aimed to reveal both connections and disjunctures between British Columbia and India, and between these sites and the metropole that they shared. In selecting these places, my thesis differs from other comparative studies of the British Empire, not least because British Columbia and India have never been subjected to sustained historical comparison. Many comparative colonial histories have focused on settler colonies, which has helped to produce a much richer understanding of the connections and differences between similar sites. However, these studies have not interrogated the connections between settler colonialism and other forms of British imperialism, leaving historiographical understandings of imperial places like British Columbia and India largely detached from one another.⁷¹⁶ Philippa Levine's *Prostitution, Race and Politics* is a key exception. Comparing the regulation of venereal disease across four very different sites (Hong Kong, India, Queensland and the Straits Settlement), Levine's work models the potential of another comparative approach by examining simultaneously the complex diversity of the British Empire, and its broadly shared and often interconnected nature even between very disparate places.⁷¹⁷ My work has sought to explore similar configurations of empire in another context: the distinctiveness and links between family networks in two different sites.

⁷¹⁶ See, for example, Annie E. Coombes, ed., *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Chilton, *Agents of Empire*; and Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*. For one recent summary of examples and advantages of this approach, see Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 25.

⁷¹⁷ Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics*.

In this choice of topic, it also moves away from the common themes of colonial comparative history, which tend to focus on sex and sexuality, colonial governmentality and humanitarian networks.

Because the thesis focuses on places and themes not usually thought together, it has been able to connect and expand upon the historiographies grounded in each site. In the British Columbian context, for example, the project is situated in relation to a very limited literature on intimacy, family and empire. Much of the provincial historiography remains inwardly focused, but as the thesis has demonstrated, British family connections continued to be very important for many settlers. Recent research has begun to grapple with British Columbia's history in relation to the wider imperial context, but this thesis is the first extended and detailed study to underscore the significance of personal connections between Britain and British Columbia in the nineteenth century.⁷¹⁸

The historiography of British India is much larger in comparison, and this thesis builds on a rich literature on Anglo-Indian families by examining different kinds of relationships. For example, Elizabeth Buettner's *Empire Families* largely focuses on the relationships between parents and young children between Britain and India; Mary Procida's *Married to the Empire* especially considers the relationships between wives and husbands in service of the Raj; and Margot Finn's recent research has examined the material and socio-economic histories of Anglo-Indian families during the period of Company rule.⁷¹⁹ This thesis emphasises instead the epistolary claims to affection and obligation between adult siblings, between parents and grown children, and between Anglo-Indians and those relatives who remained in Britain without Indian experience. In addition, because much of the existing literature on family and empire is focused on India, the thesis has sought to situate this topic within a wider and comparative context, asking what aspects of these family histories were specific to India and what ones might reflect a wider British or imperial pattern.

While the thesis has aimed to expand and bring together these bodies of literature, there remain avenues for further research which would continue this project of clarifying and complicating understandings of British imperialism and

⁷¹⁸ See especially Adele Perry's more recent articles, including 'State of Empire'; 'Whose World was British?'; 'Nation, Empire and the Writing of History'; and 'Is Your Garden in England, Sir.' Also Mouat, 'Situation Vancouver Island in the British World'; and Bosher, 'Vancouver Island in the Empire.'

⁷¹⁹ Buettner, *Empire Families*; Procida, *Married to the Empire*; Finn, 'Colonial Gifts'; Finn, 'Anglo-Indian Lives'; and Finn, 'Family Formations.'

colonial families. First, my attention has been focused on the middle- and upper-class families whose correspondence has been archived, and other sources and families have thus been beyond its scope. Further work should be undertaken in order to understand the relationships between the correspondence of these families and the experiences of others, including the 'poor whites' in India, a wider proportion of the transient labourers in British Columbia, or mixed-race families in both sites.

Second, in this thesis I have focused on family networks that flowed through the metropole. As a result, this study has not fully acknowledged the trans-imperial connections of the families in question, which were not always confined to movements and communications between the metropole and a single colony. As illustrated by Appendix 1, a number of British Columbian settlers had family links to the Caribbean colonies, while many gold-miners arrived via Australia or New Zealand. More markedly, a significant proportion of these individuals had personal or family histories in India.⁷²⁰ In this latter sense, India and British Columbia were shaped and related not only by ties to Britain, but also by those that bypassed, circumvented or flowed beyond the metropole. There is much more fruitful research to be done into these migrations in order to expand existing narratives of settlement in British Columbia, and to produce a further entwined and nuanced understanding of family networks, mobility and imperialism more widely.

Finally, significant questions also still remain for me about what, if anything, made these connections between people and places truly imperial. As I have argued, letters were important in linking individual colonial sites with the metropole through affective connections and family forms of knowledge. However, this process could be very distinct to particular sites rather than producing or appealing to a wider notion of empire or Britishness. Anglo-Indian families, for example, often clearly articulated concerns with promoting and performing imperial duties, but these were very much specific to the Indian context. Likewise, British Columbian families were concerned with the process of settlement and, in some cases, with the performance of political or military work, but there is little sense that most saw themselves as actors in a broader imperial project. This issue might be productively probed through further comparative study beyond the borders of the British Empire. Did British families with relatives in the United States, for example, maintain different kinds of relationships, or did their extra-imperial affective connections and epistolary

⁷²⁰ See also Buettner, *Empire Families*, 241-43.

communications function in generally similar ways to those within the empire? A study of family networks, sustained and stretched by migration and letter-writing, that considers those both within and beyond the borders of the British Empire might reveal a more distinctive and interconnected understanding of late-nineteenth-century British imperialism.

While the arguments of my thesis have been grounded in the specific imperial and familial circumstances in which this late-nineteenth-century correspondence was produced, the broader questions at stake resonate deeply in a contemporary context. Recent political rhetoric about broken families is undermined and unsettled by a historical perspective that reminds us that family has never always been near, nor has it always been dear. There is not a historical (usually identified as Victorian) model of a stable and loving family life to which we should aim to return at the exclusion of all other kinds of relationship. Rather, family has long been diverse and flexible, a combination of affective ties and obligations that could stretch or break across distances and disjunctures of all kinds. At the same time, in a contemporary world obsessed with globalisation, this history also reminds us that the places in which we live have developed—indeed, have been given meaning again and again—through long-standing connections that extend beyond their borders. In today's world, as in the late-nineteenth-century British Empire, this process has been shaped by the politics of privilege and power that enable particular kinds of movements for particular kinds of people; these politics, too, have offered legitimacy and longevity to certain voices to narrate this history. By focusing on the everyday and emotional lives of colonising families, this thesis has suggested some ways in which asymmetrical power relations could be sustained, justified and lived out in deeply personal and seemingly banal actions. In a world that continues to struggle with the legacies and lived realities of imperialism, this is a point that surely bears deeper reflection for everyone.

Appendix 1: Biographical Notes on Key British Columbian Families

Allison

Susan Moir was born in September 1845 in Colombo, Ceylon. Her family had been involved in South Asia for several generations. Her paternal grandfather, William Moir, had been stationed in Bengal with the 16th Regiment of Foot, then later in Colombo and Ratnapura with the Ceylon Regiment. Susan's paternal grandmother was Ishbel Clarke, the daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Clarke of the East India Company.

Susan's father, Stratton, was sent to Scotland as a child, where he lived with his aunt and attended school. He earned an MA from Marischal College, Aberdeen University. He may have worked in a banking house in London for a period, and then for the colonial service; he held a position on a plantation owned by Ceylon's Colonial Secretary when Susan was born. Susan's mother was Susan Louisa Mildern. She was the daughter of Jan Mildern, who was a Dutch sea captain from Amsterdam.

Susan's father died when she was only four, at which point she, her mother and her two siblings (Stratton Jr. and Jane) moved from Ceylon to London in order to live with relatives. Her mother remarried a few years later. Her second husband, Thomas Glennie, decided to move the family to British Columbia. There, they lived briefly in Victoria and New Westminster before travelling up the Fraser River to Fort Hope. Susan's sister Jane soon married Edgar Dewdney, an influential civil engineer, politician and later lieutenant governor.

After Thomas Glennie deserted the family, Susan worked as a governess and teacher in Victoria and New Westminster. She later married John Fall Allison, originally of Leeds. John Allison had moved to New York State as a child. He moved west as an adult during the California gold rush, then north to British Columbia in 1858. There, he worked on government contracts on trails and roads, later pre-empting ranching land in the Princeton area where he settled with Susan. Together, they had fourteen children. Susan died in 1937.

See Margaret A. Ormsby, ed., *A Pioneer Gentlewoman in British Columbia: The Recollections of Susan Allison* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1976).

Barnsley

John Barnsley was born on 6 September 1860 in Birmingham, England. He moved to Victoria in 1881, where he initially worked as a gunsmith and an importer of sporting goods. Subsequently, he worked for the Boscowitz Steamship Company (later called the Union Steamship Company). John married Elizabeth Jane Collister on Christmas 1887. She had been born in Australia on 8 October 1867, and had immigrated to Canada in 1875. In 1901, the family was living on Gorge Road in Victoria, though John's work with the steamship company later took him to Prince Rupert. John Barnsley died at Point Grey, Vancouver on 19 August 1924. He was survived by his wife Elizabeth, sons Jack and Frank, and daughter Clara Robinson.

See the 1901 Census of Canada, Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands via VHIHistory, ed. Patrick A. Dunae (Vancouver Island University and University of Victoria) <<http://www.vihistory.ca/content/census/1901/census1901.php?page=main>>; BCA, vital events registrations, 1887-09-003914 (Barnsley marriage) and 1924-09-334996 (John Barnsley's death); and CVA, PR-24, John Barnsley collection.

Bayley

Felicit  Caroline (Carrie) Bayley was born in 1855. She first moved to Victoria with her family at the age of three, when her father John was appointed Superintendent of Police in the burgeoning gold-rush town. In 1861, the Bayley family returned to England as John wanted his children to be educated there. He became Bandmaster of the 46th Regiment of Foot until his death in 1871. Two years later, Carrie returned to Victoria, where she would eventually marry Colonel Richard Wolfenden, retired of the Royal Engineers and then the Queen's Printer in British Columbia. She died in Victoria on 31 May 1943 at the age of 87.

See Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., 'The Journal of Arthur Thomas Bushby, 1858-1859,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 21 (1957-58): 162; John Bayley's obituary, *British Colonist*, 5 October 1871; BCA, vital events registration, 1943-09-625341 (Felicit  C. Wolfenden's death); and BCA, E/C/W83, Felicit  Caroline (Bayley) Wolfenden collection.

Beeman

Samuel O. Beeman was a Hudson's Bay Company clerk in Victoria during the 1860s. His brother, the Rev. Thomas Beeman, and his sister-in-law, Sarah Beeman, lived in Cranbrook, Kent.

See BCA, MS-2073, Samuel O. Beeman collection.

Birch

Arthur Nonus Birch was born in September 1836 in Yoxford, Suffolk. Arthur's paternal grandmother was the sister of the first Lord Stradbroke. His paternal grandfather was stationed in Chandernagore with the colonial service. His father, the Rev. Henry William Rouse Birch, had been born in Calcutta, but was sent to Britain to be educated at an early age, later taking a first class degree in Classics at Balliol College, Oxford, and entering the church. His mother, Lydia Mildred, was born in Essex. She was the daughter of D. Mildred, a partner in the Bank of Masterman, Petre and Co.

Arthur was born into a family of nine. His three eldest brothers were educated at Eton: Henry became Tutor to the then-Prince of Wales, and later Canon of Ripon; Augustus had a distinguished career at Cambridge, and became a master at Eton; and Ernest left Eton for Haileybury, taking posts in India and eventually becoming the youngest judge on the High Court Bench. Arthur's brother John, meanwhile, took a post in the Spanish house of Mildred and Co., and later became Governor of the Bank of England.

Arthur joined the Colonial Office in February 1855, and held a number of positions, including as Edward Bulwer-Lytton's assistant private secretary. In overseas postings, Birch served as Colonial Secretary of British Columbia (1864-66), Lieutenant-Governor of Penang and Province Wellesley (1871-72), Colonial Secretary of Ceylon (1873-76), and Lieutenant Governor of Ceylon (1876-78). He later worked for the Bank of England. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and a Knight Commander, Order of St. Michael and St. George (KCMG). Arthur was married to Josephine Watts-Russell, daughter of Jesse David Watts-Russell, JP, MP. He died 31 October 1914, at the age of 78.

See BCA, MS-0061, Birch family collection.

Brough

John Brough was born at Mintium Mill in Glen Artney, near Comrie, Perthshire, around 1820. In 1851, he emigrated to Ballarat, near Melbourne, where he had a small land-holding, worked for the census, and wrote for the local newspaper. He moved to British Columbia around 1859. By 1863, he was farming at Mary Hill, near New Westminster. The following year, he travelled with the expeditionary force formed to deal with the Bute Inlet crisis (the Chilcotin War, see

p. 192-93). He also worked on government contracts in the colony, for example building wagon roads. John had a sister Catherine, as well as other relatives, in Comrie. He also mentioned a relative, William Brough, in Ballarat, Australia.

See BCA, MS-2797, John Brough collection.

Bullock-Webster

Julia Rachel Stevens Price was born in 1826 in Tenby, Pembrokeshire. She married Thomas Bullock-Webster, a lieutenant of the 15th Native Bombay Infantry of the East India Company, when he was on leave in Paris. Thomas later left the army, and the couple moved to South Africa (c. 1853-55). They may have then moved to India, where Thomas was appointed Deputy Collector in Sind. After her husband's death in 1872, Julia lived in several towns in Wales and southern England. When she left to British Columbia in the mid-1890s, she was living in Oxford with two daughters, Evelyn Eliza (Lizzie) and Helen (Nell) Georgiana.

The British Columbia connections began with two of her sons. William Howard moved to British Columbia around 1887. He settled on a homestead in Keremeos with his brother Edward Nathaniel, who farmed the land for years but eventually moved to Penticton and invested in local businesses. William joined the British Columbia Police in 1892 as a special constable, and eventually became Chief Constable and later a barrister.

When nearly seventy years old, Julia went to visit her sons in British Columbia, accompanied by her daughters, Nell and Lizzie (1894-96). Today she is known in the Okanagan-Similkameen area for the watercolours that she completed during her visit, which are mostly botanical and landscape studies.

See Connie Brim, 'Julia Bullock-Webster (c. 1826-1907),' Penticton Gallery <<http://www.pentictonartgallery.com/scms.asp?node=Julia%20Bullock-Webster%20%28c.%201826-1907%29>>; and BCA, MS-1965, Julia Rachel Stevens Price Bullock-Webster.

Burnaby

Robert Burnaby was born on 30 November 1828 in Leicestershire, the fourth son of the Rev. Thomas and Sarah (née Meares) Burnaby. Thomas Burnaby was a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and held a number of positions including as Chaplain to the Marquis of Anglesey, while Robert's maternal grandfather, the Rev. Andrew Meares, was a clergyman in Daventry. Although holding prominent

positions, the family was not particularly wealthy. Robert's brothers entered the Church, the Royal Engineers and the Royal Navy. He also had five sisters, three of whom remained unmarried, as did he.

Robert worked in the Comptroller's Office in Customs House, London, for seventeen years. His years as a civil servant provided him with a personal introduction from Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Governor James Douglas when he decided to immigrate to British Columbia in 1858. Robert arrived in British Columbia with the intention of running the colonial end of Henderson and Burnaby, a company that he had established with a school friend, Edward Henderson. They were in the commission merchant business, an undertaking that carried a lot of risk and speculation, and the firm collapsed in the 1860s after Henderson's death (he was also the financier of the project) and during an economic depression in British Columbia.

Robert was involved in a number of other ventures, however, working for a short time as Colonel Richard Moody's private secretary, trying to develop a coal industry in Burrard Inlet with Walter Moberly, and entering the local real estate and insurance business. He was also deeply involved in local politics and elite social circles. Less than two years after his arrival in the colony, he was elected a member of the Legislative Assembly of Vancouver Island. He also helped to found the Victoria Chamber of Commerce and the Freemasons' Lodge in Victoria, and he was president of the city's Amateur Dramatic Association.

Robert retired due to illness in 1869, and as his health worsened, he decided to return to England (1874). He died in Woodthorpe four years later, on 10 January 1878. Several places in British Columbia were named for him, including a city (now part of Greater Vancouver), a mountain (now home to Simon Fraser University), a lake and other sites.

See Madge Wolfenden, 'Burnaby, Robert,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 10 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=4869>; Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., 'The Journal of Arthur Thomas Bushby, 1858-1859,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 21 (1957-58):164-65; and Anne Burnaby McLeod and Pixie McGeachie, eds., *Land of Promise: Robert Burnaby's Letters from Colonial British Columbia, 1858-1863* (Burnaby: City of Burnaby, 2002).

Bushby

Arthur Thomas Bushby was born on 2 March 1835. His father, Joseph Bushby, was a respected London merchant, a partner in Bushby and Lee of St.

Peter's Chambers, Cornhill, and an owner of two West Indian estates on St. Croix. His mother, Anne Sarah (née Stedman), spoke five languages, wrote fiction for the *New Monthly Magazine*, and completed the first English translation of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Ice Maiden*.

Before moving to British Columbia in 1858, Arthur was an amateur musician in London, while half-heartedly pursuing business opportunities there. In British Columbia, he attempted and failed to set up a steam sawmill, and then turned to government work. He was private secretary to Judge Matthew Baillie Begbie, registrar of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, registrar general of deeds for British Columbia, postmaster general, registrar of joint stock companies, justice of the peace, stipendiary magistrate, and member of the Legislative Council, among other positions. Arthur married Governor James Douglas's third daughter, Agnes, in May 1862. They had five children (four daughters and one son). He died on 18 May 1875 in New Westminster at the age of 40.

See Dorothy Blakey Smith, 'Bushby, Arthur Thomas,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 10 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=4870>; and Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., 'The Journal of Arthur Thomas Bushby, 1858-1859,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 21 (1957-58): 83-198.

Christie

John Christie was from Scotland. By his own account, he was attracted to British Columbia by a newspaper article in the *Scotsman* in the summer of 1858. On 1 November 1858, he married Barbara Campbell, a woman who had been working for his brother in Edinburgh. The following spring, they sailed from Leith for London, then onward to Victoria on the *Gomelza*. They arrived in British Columbia in early November 1859. There, they first found work as a housekeeper and gardener, and later bounced around from job to job. John eventually found work with the Hudson's Bay Company in Nanaimo, doing everything from working at the saw mill to weighing coal from the mines. He then preempted a piece of land in Nanaimo, where the couple settled and farmed. John and Barbara had a daughter named Ruth. John mentions various relatives in Scotland, including a brother Willie and a woman named Eliza, possibly a sister.

See BCA, MS-0142, John Christie collection.

Crease

Henry Pering Pellew Crease was born in 1823 at Ince Castle, Cornwall. He was the son of Captain Henry Crease (Royal Navy) and Mary Crease (heiress of Ince Castle). Henry was educated at Cambridge, and was called to the Bar in 1849. He then travelled to Canada (now Ontario), working with a surveying party on Lake Superior before returning to England to manage the Great Wheal Vor United Mines. In 1853, Henry married Sarah Lindley, daughter of the botanist John Lindley. They would have six children who survived to adulthood (Mary, Barbara, Susan, Lindley, Arthur and Josephine). Following financial troubles in England, Henry and Sarah decided to move their growing family to Victoria. Henry practiced law there, and was later appointed Attorney General of British Columbia and Supreme Court judge. He also became involved in politics, serving in the legislative assembly. Henry was knighted in 1896. The family was also very influential in the city's social, religious, philanthropic and cultural scene. Henry died in 1905, and Sarah died in 1922.

See Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., 'The Journal of Arthur Thomas Bushby, 1858-1859,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 21 (1957-58): 170-78; Kathryn Bridge, *Henry & Self: The Private Life of Sarah Crease 1826-1922* (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1996); Gordon R. Elliott, 'Henry P. Pellew Crease: Confederation or No Confederation,' *BC Studies* 12 (Winter 1971-1972): 63-74; and BCA, MS-0055, MS-0056 and MS-0879, Crease family collections.

Cridge

Edward Cridge was born in Devonshire on 17 December 1817 to John and Grace Cridge. His father was a local schoolmaster. Edward was educated at Cambridge (B.A., 1848) and was incumbent at Christ Church, West Ham, from 1852 to 1854. In 1854 he married Mary Winmill. They moved to British Columbia in the same year, as he had been appointed as chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Victoria. In the early 1870s, he joined the Reformed Episcopal Church after a theological dispute with George Hills, the Anglican Bishop of Vancouver Island. He was later elected a Bishop of the Episcopal Church. Edward was also involved in establishing Victoria's first hospital, the Female Infirmary, and the Protestant Orphan's Home. He died on 6 May 1913.

See Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., 'The Journal of Arthur Thomas Bushby, 1858-1859,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 21 (1957-58): 171-72; BCA, MS-0320, Edward Cridge collection; and CVA, PR-76, Cridge family collection.

Douglas

James Douglas was born in Demerara in 1803. His father was a Scottish man, John Douglas, whose family had ties to sugar and shipping industries in Demerara and Berbice. His mother was a free woman of colour, Martha Ann Ritchie (later Telfer). James had two full siblings, Alexander and Rebecca. His father returned to Scotland when James was still a child, and had another family there.

When James was about eight years old, he was sent to Lanark, Scotland, to be educated, along with his brother Alexander. They were then apprenticed to the fur-trading North West Company, based out of Montreal, when James was about sixteen. James began as a clerk, and worked his way up through the fur-trade hierarchy, first with the North West Company and later with the Hudson's Bay Company. By the time of his retirement, he was the top official on the west coast, working as Chief Factor at Fort Victoria. In 1827, James entered a marriage 'in the custom of the country' with Amelia Connolly, a Cree woman who was the daughter of his superior. They were later married again by an Anglican missionary. Together they had thirteen children, six of whom reached adulthood. In 1851, he was appointed governor of Vancouver Island, and seven years later he became governor of the mainland colony as well. When he retired in 1864, James was named Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath. He died in 1877 in Victoria.

See Margaret A. Ormsby, 'Douglas, Sir James,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 10 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=4955>; Adele Perry, "'Is Your Garden in England, Sir": James Douglas's Archive and the Politics of Home,' *History Workshop Journal* 70 (2010): 67-85; Adele Perry, 'James Douglas, Canada, and Guyana,' *Stabroek News*, 4 April 2011 <<http://www.stabroeknews.com/2011/features/in-the-diaspora/04/04/james-douglas-canada-and-guyana/>>; and W. Kaye Lamb, 'Letters to Martha,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 1 (January 1937): 33-44.

Evans

John Evans was born on 15 January 1816 in Machynlleth, North Wales. As a young adult, he moved to Manchester to work for cotton manufacturers, but after he married (first to Martha, daughter of John Evans of Denbighshire; then to Ann, daughter of Edward Thomas, also of Denbighshire), he decided to move back to Wales in order to raise his four children. The family moved to Tremadoc, Carnarvonshire, where he took up work in the mining industry. On 17 February 1863, John sailed out of Liverpool as the leader of the Company of Welsh Adventurers, a group of Welsh miners hoping to strike it rich in the Cariboo gold

rush. He left behind his wife and three children. One son (Taliesin) accompanied him, but left his father after dramatic failure in the goldfields, moving to San Francisco instead. John stayed in British Columbia until his death. There, he served in the provincial legislature, and remarried again, this time to a woman named Catherine Jones, who had come to British Columbia from California. John died in Stanley, British Columbia, on 25 August 1879.

See Robie L. Reid, 'Captain Evans of Cariboo,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 2, 4 (October 1938): 233-46; and BCA, MS-2112, Evans family collection.

Fawcett

Thomas Lea Fawcett was an interior decorator, painter, furniture manufacturer and upholsterer from Kidderminster. His father had been a maltster, and he came from a family of strict Nonconformists. In 1838, he married Jane Wignall, who was the daughter of a Birmingham small arms manufacturer. Jane had spent some time working as a governess or ladies' companion in France and Spain after her father's business had failed. Following their marriage, Thomas and Jane moved to Australia. In 1849, they—along with their sons Edgar and Rowland—moved again, this time to San Francisco. Thomas later bought a ship, with which he planned to take lumber (as well as his family) back to England. However, when the ship was wrecked off of Vancouver Island in 1858, the family was ruined, and they moved to Victoria to try to recover some losses. Thomas started a business there, and was later appointed Government Agent in Nanaimo. When Jane died in 1864 in Victoria, the family went to England, and the two youngest sons were left with the Wignall family to be raised. Thomas died around 1890.

See Edgar Fawcett, *Some Reminiscences of Old Victoria* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912); and BCA, MS-1963, Jane Fawcett collection.

Guillod

Harry Guillod (Henry, in some records) was born on 20 August 1838 in London. He apprenticed as a chemist until sailing for British Columbia in May 1862 with his younger brother, George. They arrived in Esquimalt on 3 July 1862, and they then made their way to the Cariboo goldfields. After failing to strike it rich there, Harry purchased a third-share in a Chemanius sawmill, and preempted land near the site. He later became an Anglican catechist, serving at a mission among the First Nations community at Alberni, then at Comox. In 1881, he was appointed

Indian Agent for the West Coast Agency, a post that he would hold until 1903. Harry married Kate Elizabeth Monro at Sandwick in 1885. His brother George, with whom he had originally emigrated, returned to England after their failure in the Cariboo; he later moved to South Africa.

See Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., 'Harry Guillod's Journal of a Trip to Cariboo, 1862,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 19, 3-4 (1955): 187-232.

Harris

Alexander Charles Harris was born in 1872 in Calne, Wiltshire. His older brother, Joseph Colebrook Harris, studied at the Agricultural College in Guelph, Ontario, before moving to British Columbia to farm. He established himself first in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island, and then moved to ranching and dairying in the Slocan Valley. Joseph became a prominent socialist there, running for local offices and publishing widely. In 1891, Alexander—then a student in England—travelled to British Columbia on holiday to visit his brother. Alexander apparently later worked as an engineer in Leicester, but he died on 30 July 1955 in Victoria. Joseph died in Victoria at the age of 70, on 29 March 1951.

They had other siblings (listed as Soph, Bessie, Mary and Willie in Alexander's diary). In Calne, the Harris family ran the pork processing plant that dominated the town's industry.

See Douglas Colebrook Harris, *Fish, Law, and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 251, fn. 47; Clyde Binfield, 'Industry, Professionalism and Mission: The Placing of an Emancipated Laywoman, Dr. Ruth Massey 1873-1963,' in *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism*, ed. Deryck W. Lovegrove (London: Routledge, 2002), 199-200, fn. 6; BCA, vital events registrations, 1951-09-003646 (Joseph Colebrook Harris's death) and 1955-09-008081 (Alexander Charles Harris's death); BCA, MS-0819, Richard Colebrook Harris collection; and BCA, MS-1463, Alexander Charles Harris collection.

Hawkins

Alben (or Alfred) Hawkins was from Tottenham, Middlesex, and he had at least one brother, Henry. Alben moved to British Columbia as a sapper in the Royal Engineers, and was discharged there in 1863. He stayed in the colony, working as a carpenter and bricklayer, and worked on the construction of the Hastings Mill. He eventually surveyed and settled in the Matsqui-Abbotsford area. He is credited as founding the community of Mount Lehman, and later worked as a councillor in the Matsqui district.

See BCA, MS-0441, Alben Hawkins collection.

Hayward

Charles Hayward was born on 12 May 1839 in Stratford, Essex. He was the eldest son of Charles and Harriet (née Tomlinson) Hayward, an Anglican merchant family. He was educated at Salem College, Bow, and apprenticed as a carpenter from his early teens. On 14 March 1862, Charles married Sarah McChesney in All Saint's Church, West Ham. Sarah had been born on 16 November 1839 in London. She was the daughter of John and Sarah McChesney. She grew up in West Ham, and she headed the West Ham and Stratford Girls' British School after receiving her schoolmistress's certificate in December 1859.

Three days after their wedding, Charles left for British Columbia, arriving nearly two months later on 7 May 1862. Sarah followed several months later, arriving in Victoria on 10 January 1863. After initially struggling to find employment, Charles worked as a carpenter and was eventually able to start his own contracting business. This expanded into a factory specialising in sashes, doors, millwork and the manufacture of coffins. The latter specialty then took him into the undertaking business; he established the B.C. Funeral Company in 1867, the first of its kind in Victoria.

Sarah continued to teach in British Columbia. She founded the Fort Street Academy, taught at Angela College, and was principal of the girls' department of the city's public school. She was at the heart of an 1880 controversy over the re-licensing of teachers, which erupted after a change in school board policy worked to replace long-term (and usually female) teachers. Sarah was outspoken in her criticism, and found herself failed on her re-licensing examination; she took the issue to court but lost, and after refusing to take the examination again, ended her teaching career. Sarah then turned to local charity work, getting involved with organisations such as the Friendly Help Society, the ladies' committee of the British Columbia Protestant Orphans' Home, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Local Council of Women in Victoria and Vancouver Island, the women's auxiliary of the Royal Jubilee Hospital, and the committee of the Homes for Aged and Infirm Women. Charles was involved in the men's branches of several of these organisations, including acting as the director of the Royal Jubilee Hospital and as president of the British Columbia Protestant Orphans' Home. He also served as a city alderman, chairman of the school board, and the mayor of Victoria. He was a member of Masonic, Oddfellows, Foresters and Pioneers societies, as well as the Pacific club.

Charles and Sarah had nine children (including the province's first recorded triplets on 8 January 1873), but only three lived to adulthood. The funeral business was passed on through the family line, and continues to this day. Sarah Hayward died 30 July 1901 and Charles died 8 July 1919, both in Victoria.

See Kathryn Bridge, 'McChesney, Sarah (Hayward),' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 13 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=6893>; 'Hayward, Charles,' *The Canadian Who's Who* (London: The Times, 1910), via the Internet Archive, Cornell University <<http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924014019255>>; Harald Gunderson, *Funeral Service in British Columbia: A Century of Caring. A History of Funeral Services Care-Givers, Memorial and Monument Makes and Some of the Cemeteries of the Province 1867-1992* (Victoria: B. C. Funeral Association, 1992); and CVA, PS-118, Charles Hayward collection.

Helmcken

John Sebastian Helmcken was born on 5 June 1824 in Whitechapel, East London, to German immigrant parents (Claus Helmcken and Catharine Mittler). His father had moved from Bruneslai to London during the Napoleonic wars, and his grandfather (from Meßkirch) had been a soldier in the Swiss guards. John was the eldest son. The family was poor, especially after Claus died and Catharine went to work, but after an education at St. George's German and English School, John met a pharmacist who supported his further education by providing him with apprenticeships and paying for his a medical education at Guy's Hospital. In 1847, John was hired as a ship's surgeon on a Hudson's Bay Company ship and travelled to Rupert's Land. He passed the examinations for the Royal College of Surgeons in the following year, after which he sailed to India and China. On his return, he moved to Vancouver Island as a surgeon and clerk with the Hudson's Bay Company, becoming the colony's first physician.

He was a prominent figure in British Columbia, particularly as a politician. He served in the first Legislative Assembly of Vancouver Island (1856), as Speaker of the Legislative Council both for Vancouver Island and later for the united colony of British Columbia (until 1871), as chief trader within the Hudson's Bay Company (1863 to 1870), as executive council member for Governor Musgrave (1870), and as a key figure in bringing British Columbia into Canadian confederation. He also held an appointment on the board of the Canadian Pacific Railway. He married Governor James Douglas's daughter Cecilia on 27 December 1852. The Helmckens had four sons and three daughters. John died on 1 September 1920.

Correspondence from his mother indicates that he had siblings and cousins in the London area, and a sister (Ann) in Australia. One of his sisters worked as a

housemaid, but many London letters describe periods of economic depression and unemployment for the family.

See J. B. Kerr, *Biographical Dictionary of Well-Known British Columbians: With a Historical Sketch* (Vancouver: Kerr and Begg, 1890); Daniel P. Marshall, 'Helmcken, John Sebastian,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 14 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=7436>; Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., *The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975); and BCA, MS-0505, Helmcken family collection.

Hicks

Roger Hicks was an English doctor who travelled through British Columbia while attempting to reach the Klondike goldfields in 1898 and 1899. He worked as a labourer en route. He later moved between Victoria and Washington State, largely undertaking manual labour there as well.

See the T. Roger C. Hicks collection in the British Columbia Archives.

Moody

Mary Susanna (née Hawks) Moody was the daughter of Mary (née Boyd) and Joseph Hawks of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Joseph Hawks was a relatively prominent local figure: a banker, a Justice of the Peace and a Deputy Lieutenant. Mary had at least two sisters, Emily and Juliana.

In July 1852, Mary married Richard Clement Moody, a military officer and colonial administrator with a long family history of service in the empire. Richard was born in Barbados on 13 February 1813. His mother, Martha Clement, had been born in St. Ann's Garrison, Barbados, while his father, Colonel Thomas Moody, was stationed in the West Indies with the Royal Engineers and the Colonial Office. Richard had at least two brothers: Colonel Hampden Blaimire Moody (also of the Royal Engineers) and the Rev. James Leith Moody (an army chaplain). Richard was educated by tutor and private school, and later at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. By the time Richard and Mary married, he was a commissioned officer in the Royal Engineers. His postings included in Ireland, Woolwich, the West Indies, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Malta, as well as a stint as Lieutenant Governor of the Falkland Islands.

In 1858, Richard was posted to the mainland colony of British Columbia as commander of the Columbia Detachment of the Royal Engineers. Mary and their four children accompanied him to Victoria, then to New Westminster (a townsite

which he selected and surveyed himself), as the Royal Engineers developed roads and other infrastructure for the colony. Richard also became the first Lieutenant-Governor of the colony (a dormant commission) and the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works for British Columbia. When the detachment was disbanded in 1863, Richard, Mary and their growing family—7 children at this point, and eventually 11—returned to England. Richard died on 31 March 1887 in Bournemouth.

See Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., 'The Journal of Arthur Thomas Bushby, 1858-1859,' *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 21 (1957-58): 183-84; Margaret A. Ormsby, 'Moody, Richard Clement,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 11 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=5715>; and BCA, MS-0060 and MS-1101, Mary Susanna (Hawks) Moody collections.

Nation

Harold Turton Nation was born in 1876 in Dunedin, New Zealand. He studied civil engineering at the University of London. In 1897, he moved to British Columbia, where he surveyed railways in the Kootenay region. He then held a number of manual labour and surveying jobs, especially in the logging industry. He also worked for the Fort Steele government agent. In 1906, he was a field assistant to the provincial mineralogist, R. Fleet Robertson. The following year he travelled to England, where his family lived, then moved to Port Arthur as a mining engineer before turning to work for the Department of Mines in Victoria. He fought with the Canadian Expeditionary Forces during the First World War. In 1916, he married in England. He retired in 1946, and died in Victoria in 1967.

The extended Nation family had a long history of mobility in the British Empire and the English-speaking world, living at times in England, New Zealand, California, British Columbia and India (especially Bengal). During the time that Harold was in British Columbia, his father (Arthur Tulloh Nation) appears to have been estranged from the family.

See 'Nation family,' Memory BC, British Columbia Archival Information Network <<http://memorybc.ca/nation-family-fonds;rad>>; BCA, vital events registration, 1967-09-005263 (Harold Turton Nation's death); and BCA, MS-1151, Nation family collection.

Newcombe

Charles Frederic Newcombe was born on 15 September 1851 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He was the son of William Lister Newcombe (a railway manager) and Eliza Jane (née Rymer). Charles studied medicine at the University of Aberdeen, and

he interned at the West Riding Asylum in Wakefield. In 1873 he graduated MB, CM, with distinction, taking work as medical officer at the Lancastershire County Asylum in Rainhill. He earned his MD in 1878. He married Marian Arnold in Marylebone, London, on 6 May 1879.

After their marriage, the Newcombes moved to Windermere, where Charles practiced general medicine. In the early 1880s, he travelled to western North America, and decided that they should move there. Charles and Marian settled first in Hood River, Oregon, where he practiced medicine, started an orchard, and began his interest in natural history and collecting. In 1889, the Newcombes moved to Victoria. Charles kept a general practice there, and also worked for the provincial museum. They had four daughters and two sons before Marian died after childbirth in 1891. The three eldest children were then sent to England to live with relatives and to be educated, while Charles himself studied at the University of London and the British Museum. After returning to Victoria, he continued his work in marine biology, archaeology and collecting. Charles had relatives in West London, and at least one cousin in Christchurch, New Zealand. He died in Victoria on 19 October 1924.

See Kevin Neary, 'Charles Frederic Newcombe,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 15 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=8309>; and BCA, MS-1077, Newcombe family collection.

Norbury

Frederick Paget (Tommy) Norbury came from an old Worcestershire family based in Sherridge. His father, Col. Thomas Coningsby Norbury, had an Oxford education. He had several siblings, including one brother William (Bill) who lived with him in British Columbia for a year, and another brother Coni who spent some time in the Caribbean. Tommy came to British Columbia around 1887 as a remittance man sent and supported by his family. He set up a ranch in the Fort Steele region, eventually becoming financially independent and a respected member of the community. He worked as Justice of the Peace, Stipendiary Magistrate and Special Constable at Fort Steele. He later returned to England.

See Naomi Miller, *Fort Steele: Gold Rush to Boom Town* (Surrey: Heritage House, 2002); Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 310-11; and BCA, MS-0877, Norbury family collection.

Papley

Alexander Papley was born around 1833 in Stromness, although one of his letters indicates that he did not know his exact birth date. He moved to Nanaimo in 1851 with two brothers; one, Peter, died in Nanaimo in 1880, and the other, Joseph, appears to have returned to Stromness. Alexander may have been an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company for a period, while the 1882 Directory listed him as a weighman for the Victoria Coal Mining and Land Company. He may have either married or lived in a common-law relationship with an indigenous woman. He had a daughter, Marion (or Mary Ann), who was born around 1860. Alexander died in Nanaimo on 11 March 1884.

See *The British Columbia Directory for the Years 1882-83, Embracing a Business and General Directory of the Province, Dominion, and Provincial Official Lists, Reliable Information About the Country* (Victoria: R. T. Williams, 1882), via VHistory, ed. Patrick A. Dunae (Vancouver Island University and University of Victoria) <<http://www.vhistory.ca/content/bd/1882/bd1882.php?page=victoria>>; and BCA, A/E/P19, Papley family collection.

Pringle

The Rev. A. D. Pringle (known as David by his family) was born in Bhagalpur, Behar, in 1828. His father, David Sr., worked for the East India Company, while his paternal grandfather, Alexander, was the eighth laird of Whytbank, Selkirkshire. David's mother, Frances, was the daughter of Captain Alexander Tod of Alderston.

David Pringle was educated at Cambridge. After being ordained in the Church of England, he served in several English curacies. His wife, Mary Louisa, was the daughter of the Rev. Charles Mackenzie, prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and the granddaughter of the Highland chief, the Mackenzie of Torridon, Wester Ross. She was born around 1830.

David moved to British Columbia in 1859 with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. His wife and three young children arrived about a year later; two more children would be born in the early 1860s. The family returned to England in 1864, where seven more children were born. There, David worked as vicar of Blakeney, Gloucestershire. He died in 1908, and Mary died in 1916.

See BCA, MS-0369, Alexander Pringle collection.

Robinson (Edward)

Edward W. Robinson was from Hull. In 1862, at the age of 19, he sailed on the *Silistria* from Liverpool to Victoria via the Cape Horn route. The archived copy of his ship diary was inscribed with the address, 3 Milton Street, in Hull, and the transcriber suggests that he later returned to Britain.

See BCA, MS-0083, Edward W. Robinson collection.

Robinson (Victor)

George Robinson (1825-1895), worked as the first mine manager at the Hudson's Bay Company coal and brick works in Nanaimo. During the 1860s, George also ran a photography studio in Victoria. He was married first to Ann Robinson (ca. 1825-1856), and then to Caroline Robinson (1819-1893).

His son, Victor Ernest, was born around 1853. The family returned to England at some point, because Victor returned to Victoria from Dudley, Worcestershire, as an adult. Victor worked in Victoria as a printer, and was listed in the city's 1882 directory as living on Princess Street, James Bay. He later worked as foreman in the news department at the Daily Standard office.

On 9 November 1875, Victor married Charlotte Aslett in Victoria. The 1881 census lists the Robinson family in James Bay: Victor, Charlotte (also of England, aged 28), and their children Edgar John (aged 5), Florence Adelaide (aged 4) and George Ernest (aged 2). Victor Robinson died in Victoria on 17 October 1884 at the age of 31.

See the 1881 Census of Canada, Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, via VHIHistory, ed. Patrick A. Dunae (Vancouver Island University and University of Victoria) <<http://www.vihistory.ca/content/census/1881/census1881.php?page=main>>; *The British Columbia Directory for the Years 1882-83, Embracing a Business and General Directory of the Province, Dominion, and Provincial Official Lists, Reliable Information About the Country* (Victoria: R. T. Williams, 1882), via VHIHistory, ed. Patrick A. Dunae (Vancouver Island University and University of Victoria) <<http://www.vihistory.ca/content/bd/1882/bd1882.php?page=victoria>>; BCA, MS-2813, George Robinson collection; and BCA, MS-2436, Victor Robinson collection.

Trutch

William Trutch was a solicitor from Ashcot, Somerset. He moved to St. Thomas, Jamaica, around 1820, where he worked as Clerk of the Peace. There, he married Charlotte Hannah Barnes, who came from a family with a long history of experience in Jamaica. They had five children: Charlotte Barnes (b. 1823, married William Davey), Joseph William (b. 1826, married Julia Elizabeth Hyde), John (b.

1828, married Zoe Musgrave), Emily (b. 1829, married George Pinder and Augustus Barton White), and Caroline Agnes (b. 1831, married Peter O'Reilly). Three of these children—Joseph, John and Caroline—would end up in British Columbia as adults.

The family returned to Ashcot around the 1830s, and Joseph and John were educated at Mt. Radford School, Exeter. Joseph William trained as a civil engineer. In 1849, he moved to North America, working first in the United States, and later settling in Victoria, British Columbia. His wife, Julia Hyde, was from Illinois. Once in British Columbia, Joseph quickly became a prominent engineer and surveyor. He also served as a representative in the Vancouver Island House of Assembly, and as the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works and Surveyor General of British Columbia. He was influential in British Columbia's union with Canada, and became the province's first Lieutenant Governor. Sir Joseph William Trutch (Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George) retired to Somerset in 1890, and died there fourteen years later.

His brother, John, also became a civil engineer and surveyor. After first working in Oregon, he moved to British Columbia in 1857, where he worked on major contracts like the Cariboo Wagon Road and the Alexandra Suspension Bridge. He married Zoe Musgrave, the sister of Sir Anthony Musgrave (colonial administrator in many locations, including as Governor of British Columbia). John returned to England in 1892, and died there in 1907.

Caroline was the third Trutch sibling to spend a significant amount of time in British Columbia. In 1863, she married Peter O'Reilly, who was another key political figure in Victoria. Peter was born on 27 March 1827 in Ince, England, to Patrick and Mary (née Blundell) O'Reilly, and was raised in Ireland. After time as a lieutenant in the Irish Revenue Police, Peter moved to Victoria in 1859. He held a number of government positions in British Columbia, including as stipendiary magistrate, high sheriff, Chief Gold Commissioner, member of the Legislative Council and Indian Reserve Commissioner. He also carried on private investments in real estate and mineral claims, which enabled him to gain substantial private property as well as political power. He died in Victoria on 3 September 1895 at the family home, Point Ellice House. Caroline later died in Cheriton, Kent.

Other members of the Trutch family lived elsewhere in the empire; their sister Emily, for example, lived in India for a period as her husband's regiment was stationed there.

See Robin Fisher, 'Trutch, Sir Joseph William,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 13 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=7107>; David Ricardo Williams, 'O'Reilly, Peter,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 13 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=6975>; Kent M. Haworth, 'Musgrave, Sir Anthony,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 11 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=5731>; BCA, MS-2894, O'Reilly family collection; BCA, MS-2897, Trutch family collection; and UBCSC, Trutch family collection.

Verney

Edmund Hope Verney was born on 6 April 1838. His father was Sir Harry Verney (formerly Calvert), second baronet, and his mother was Eliza (née Hope) Verney. His father and his paternal grandfather (General Sir Harry Calvert, first baronet) both had prominent military and political careers, with his father serving in the House of Commons and on the Privy Council. Edmund's stepmother was Lady Frances Parthenope (née Nightingale) Verney, sister to Florence Nightingale, and daughter of William Edward (Shore) Nightingale and Frances (née Smith) Nightingale. His maternal grandfather (Rear-Admiral Sir George Johnstone Hope) was a decorated British naval officer who served in the Napoleonic Wars and as a Member of Parliament.

Like his father and grandfather, Edmund was educated at Harrow School. He then went on to a distinguished career as captain in the Royal Navy, with decorated service in the Crimea and the Indian Mutiny. From 1862 to 1865 he commanded the HMS Grappler at Esquimalt, the Royal Navy's Pacific Base in British Columbia. He later served on a ship off West Africa. In England, he was elected to be a representative on the first London county council and to be a Member of Parliament, although he was expelled from the latter position for a conviction on a charge of conspiring to procure an underage girl for a criminal purpose.

Edmund married Margaret Hay Williams on 14 January 1868. They had one son (Sir Harry Calvert Williams Verney) and three daughters. He died on 8 May 1910. The Verney family home was Claydon House, Buckinghamshire.

See Allan Pritchard, ed. *Vancouver Island Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-65* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996); H. E. D. Blakiston, 'Verney, Margaret Maria, Lady Verney (1844–1930),' rev. H. J. Spencer, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36644>>; John D. Haigh, 'Verney, Frances Parthenope, Lady Verney (1819–1890),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46562>>; and M. M. Verney, 'Verney, Sir Harry, second baronet (1801–1894),' rev. H. C. G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28231>>.

Witherby

Henry Leonard Witherby moved from England to British Columbia in 1899. He found work on a farm on Vancouver Island after discovering that he was too young to join the North West Mounted Police; the minimum age was 22 at the time. He later worked on the Canadian prairies before returning to British Columbia and settling on Ardmore Drive, Sidney, Vancouver Island. After his wife died in 1959, he returned to England to live with his brother in Poole, Dorset.

See BCA, E/C/W77, H. Leonard Witherby collection.

Appendix 2: Biographical Notes on Key Anglo-Indian Families

Beveridge

The five Beveridge siblings were David, Euphemia (Phemie), Margaret (Maggie), Alexander (Allie) and Henry. The youngest two—Allie and Henry—spent time in India with the military and civil service in India, while Phemie travelled to visit Henry there on one occasion.

Their father was Henry Beveridge. He was the son of David Beveridge (a baker, then Deacon and Convenor of Trades) and Margaret Thomson (daughter of a carpenter). Educated at the University of Edinburgh, Henry Sr. worked briefly as a preacher, trained as a barrister, and attempted several business ventures. However, he became bankrupt in 1848 after a depression in trade following the railway boom, and the family struggled with finances in the years that followed. The boys were taken out of school, which gave the children more time to spend together in their younger years. Henry Sr. spent much of this time pursuing writing and translation work, including his *Comprehensive History of India* in three volumes, the first of which was published in 1858. The siblings' mother was Jemima (née Watt) Beveridge. Her father was Alexander Watt (supervisor of excise) and her mother was Euphemia Shirreff. Both sides of her family were solidly middle-class, with a long history of doctors, clerics and merchants.

The eldest of the siblings, David, was born in 1829. He undertook scholarly research, but never found regular work. A bachelor, he spent part of his adult life in London, and twenty years living with his mother in Culross after his father died.

Euphemia Shirreff (Phemie) was born in 1831. She also remained unmarried, living by herself for much of her adult life in a cottage-turned-aviary near the family home. She had a passion for birds, and animals more generally, but also became known for her uncertain temper (and possibly problems with alcohol).

Margaret Thomson (Maggie or Miggs) was born in 1833. She married the Rev. Stephen Bell, moving to his ministry in Eyemouth. They had no children. After his death in 1881, Maggie returned to Durham, Torryburn, to live with her mother.

Alexander Watt (Allie) was born in 1835. He went to India in 1857 in order to serve as a doctor with the 78th Highlanders during the Rebellion. He was also in the Abyssinian Campaign of 1868. At the age of 38, he returned to Scotland and married a wealthy cousin from Dunfermline. He retired shortly thereafter, and spent the rest of his life in comparative leisure.

Henry was the youngest child, born in 1837. He went to India at the same time as Allie, and worked with the Bengal Civil Service from 1857 to 1892. He held a number of positions over his thirty-five year career, including as judge in several districts. He supported Indian nationalism and home rule, and after retiring to Britain, he turned to orientalist scholarship and translation work. His first wife was Jane Howison (Jeanie) Goldie (1853-73), the granddaughter of his mother's friend. She was born in Australia. Jeanie died two years into their marriage, along with their first child.

Two years later, Henry married again, to Annette Susannah Akroyd. Annette had been born in Stourbridge, Worcestershire, on 13 December 1842, to William Akroyd (a currier who later became a successful businessman, and a leader in radical Liberal politics and the Unitarian church) and Sarah (née Walford, daughter of a livery stable owner). Annette studied at Bedford College, London. She went to Calcutta in 1872, and founded a school for girls, the Hindu Mahila Bidyalaya. After her marriage, Annette turned to orientalist scholarship, and published several translations. She died at 26 Porchester Square, Bayswater, London, on 29 March 1929. Henry died seven months later, in late 1929. Annette and Henry had two daughters and two sons, including William Henry Beveridge, Baron Beveridge, renowned for his political work on the welfare state in the twentieth century.

See Lord [William] Beveridge, *India Called Them* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1947); M. A. Scherer, 'Beveridge, Annette Susannah (1842-1929),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53954>>; Jose Harris, 'Beveridge, William Henry, Baron Beveridge (1879-1963),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31871>>; and BL, Mss Eur C176, Henry Beveridge collection.

Beynon

William George Lawrence Beynon was born on 5 November 1866. His father was Gen. W. Howell Beynon, who served with the military in India. His mother was Charlotte Lawrence. His maternal grandfather was Lt.-Gen. Sir George St. Patrick Lawrence (1804-1884), who was in the Bengal Army for forty-two years.

William was commissioned to the Royal Sussex Regiment in 1887 and joined the Indian Army in 1889. He served in the Indian Army from 1889 to 1919, much of that time along the North-West Frontier; he also fought in the Somali campaign. In 1896, he published *With Kelly to Chitral*, an account of his experiences in the Chitral campaign, during which time he had served as staff officer to Colonel Kelly's relief force. William held a number of other positions during his career, including in the military department of the Government of India. On 8 February 1899, William married Edith Norah Petrie in Kensington. Born in Peru, Norah was the youngest daughter of George Petrie. Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon (Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire, Companion of the Order of the Bath, and Distinguished Service Order) died at Gerrard's Cross, Buckinghamshire in 1955.

See the Beynon marriage announcement, the *Times*, 10 February 1899; William George Lawrence Beynon's obituary, the *Times*, 21 February 1955; John F. Riddick, *Who Was Who in British India* (Westport: Greenwood, 1998), 32; Lieutenant W. G. L. Beynon, *With Kelly to Chitral* (London: Edward Arnold, 1896); and BL, Mss Eur D830, Maj.-Gen. Sir William George Lawrence Beynon collection.

Bruce

Alexander Hervey Blackwood Bruce was born in 1826. He served in the Bengal Army for thirty years, from 1846 until his death in 1876. He had a sister, Jane Alexander, in Britain. He married Elizabeth MacKinnon. They had a daughter, Lizzie, who went to live in Calcutta with her grandmother, Julia MacKinnon, after her parents both died in 1876; Elizabeth died in Mussoorie, and Lt.-Col. Bruce died in Suez on his way back to England.

See BL, Mss Eur F455, Lt.-Col. Alexander Hervey Blackwood Bruce collection.

Grant

Charles Grant was born in Bombay on 22 February 1836. He was educated at Harrow School, Trinity College, Cambridge, and East India College, Haileybury. He served in the Bengal Civil Service from 1858 to 1885. During this time, he held a number of positions including as Commissioner of the Central Provinces, Acting Chief Commissioner, and Member of the Governor-General's Council. He also acted as the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India in the final four years of that period. He was created Companion of the Order of the Star of India in 1881 and Knight Commander of the Order of the Star in India in 1885. His first marriage

(1872) was to Ellen (née Baillie). Her father was the Right-Honourable Henry Baillie of Redcastle, Scotland. She died in 1885. His second marriage was to Lady Florence Lucia (15 October 1890). Her father was Admiral Sir Edward Alfred John Harris, and her brother was the fourth earl of Malmesbury. Sir Charles Grant died at his home, 5 Marble Arch, London, on 10 April 1903.

His brother was Robert Grant. Robert was born on 10 August 1837 at Malabar Hill, Bombay, and like his brother, he was educated at Harrow. Robert passed first in an examination for vacancies in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers, and was commissioned second lieutenant in the Royal Engineers on 23 October 1854. He served in Scotland, Jamaica and British Honduras, then as aide-de-camp to the commander of the forces in North America. He spent some years in Canada, and later in various roles in England. In 1884, he became commander of the Royal Engineers in Scotland, at the rank of colonel. He later served in Egypt, and worked for the War Office. He was elevated to lieutenant-general on 4 June 1897, and was made Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath in 1902. Robert married Victoria Alexandrina in London on 24 November 1875. Victoria was the widow of T. Owen of Conover Hall, Shropshire, and her father was John Cotes of Woodcote Hall, Shropshire. Sir Robert Grant died on 8 January 1904 at his home at 14 Granville Place, Portman Square, London, and was buried at Kensal Green Cemetery.

The father of Charles and Robert was Sir Robert Grant (Sr.). He was born on 15 January 1780 at Kidderpore, Bengal. Robert Sr. was sent to England at the age of 10, along with his brother Charles, and was educated privately before studying at Magdalene College, Cambridge. He was called to the Bar in 1807, and held a number of positions including as member of parliament. In 1834 he was appointed Governor of Bombay, and was eventually made a knight of the Royal Guelphic Order. He died on 9 July 1838 at the governor's residence, Dalpoorie, and was buried at St. Mary's Church, Poona.

The mother of Charles and Robert Jr. was Margaret (née Davidson), the daughter of Sir David Davidson of Cantray, Nairnshire. After Robert Sr. died, Margaret married Lord Josceline William Percy, MP, the son of George, fifth duke of Northumberland. She died in 1885. Her brother, Cuthbert Davidson, was a colonel who served in India.

The paternal grandfather of Charles and Robert Jr. was Charles Grant (Sr., 1746-1823), who served in India in several capacities including as secretary to the Board of Trade and director of the East India Company. He was also crucial in the founding of East India College at Haileybury. He was also a member of parliament, and is remembered as a member of the Clapham Sect. He was married to Jane (née Fraser) Grant, the daughter of Thomas Fraser of Balnain, Inverness.

The uncle of Charles Jr. and Robert Jr. was Charles Grant, Baron Glenelg (b. 1778 in Kidderpore, Bengal; d. 1866 in Cannes, France). After a childhood in India, he studied at Magdalene College, Cambridge, and was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1807. He started a parliamentary career in 1811, and held a number of positions (including as president of the Board of Trade, president of the Board of Control, and treasurer of the navy) in the decades that followed. He renewed the East India Company charter in 1833, with speculation the following year that he might be appointed governor-general of India. He instead was made Secretary of State for the Colonies; his term was controversial and rocky, and he was eventually forced to resign. He took a peerage (Baron Glenelg) in 1835. He later lived in Cannes, and died there on 23 April 1866.

See John F. Riddick, *Who Was Who in British India* (Westport: Greenwood, 1998), 148-49; R. H. Vetch, 'Grant, Sir Robert (1837-1904),' rev. James Falkner, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33517>>; Ged Martin, 'Grant, Charles, Baron Glenelg (1778-1866),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11249>>; E. J. Rapson, 'Grant, Sir Robert (1780-1838),' rev. Katherine Prior, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11284>>; Penelope Carson, 'Grant, Charles (1746-1823),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11248>>; and BL, Mss Eur E308, Sir Robert Grant collection.

Hartt

William Edward Hartt was born in 1848. He worked on the railways in India, serving as Traffic Superintendent on the Punjab Northern State Railway and the Tirhut State Railway (1883-84), and on the Eastern Bengal State Railway (1887-1902). He met his future wife, Emily, while on leave in Europe. She sailed to India to marry him in 1883, but she died two years later. Emily had a sister, Fanny Buck, in London.

See BL, Mss Eur F270, William Edward Hartt collection.

Ilbert

Helen, Lewis and Courtenay Peregrine were siblings from Thurlestone, Devon, who all spent time in India. They had other siblings including sister Marian (married name Campbell), brother Donald, three other brothers, and a sister-in-law Maye. Their father was the Rev. Peregrine Arthur Ilbert (born in Quebec, and rector of Thurlestone for fifty-five years), and their mother was Rose Anne Ilbert (née Owen, born in Tiverton, Devon). Their maternal grandfather was George Welsh Owen of Lowman Green, Tiverton, Devon.

Lewis was a barrister. Helen appears to have been living or staying with her brother, Courtenay, in Simla in the mid-1880s. Courtenay is the best known of the three. He was born at Kingsbridge, Devon, on 12 June 1841, and was educated at Marlborough School and Balliol College, Oxford. He was called to the Bar in 1869, and specialised in property law. He helped to draft bills and laws before going to India as an administrator in the early 1880s. The Ilbert Bill is perhaps the most controversial bill associated with Courtenay's work in India. In 1886, he returned to England to take up a position as assistant parliamentary counsel to the Treasury. He continued to publish on law, including Indian law, and worked for parliament in a number of capacities.

Courtenay married Jessie (née Bradley), the daughter of the Rev. Charles Bradley. By the time he died, he had been made Knight Commander of the Order of the Star of India, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, and later Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath. He was also one of the first fellows of the British Academy. He died at Troutwells, Penn, Buckinghamshire, on 14 May 1924.

See John F. Riddick, *Who Was Who in British India* (Westport: Greenwood, 1998), 187; Frank Egerton Coope, *Thurlestone Church and Parish* (Kingsbridge: F. E. Coope, 1900); R. C. J. Cocks, 'Ilbert, Sir Courtenay Peregrine (1841–1924),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34090>>; Cordelia Moyse, 'Fisher, Lettice (1875–1956),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/41132>>; and BL, Mss Eur D594, Sir Courtenay Peregrine Ilbert collection.

Keen

Mary Caroline (Pollie) Holloway was born in Wraybury, Buckinghamshire, on 30 April 1858. She was the second child of William Holloway and Mary Percy; her older brother was George, and her younger siblings were Frances, Caroline, William, Thomas and Arthur. From her mid-teens until her marriage, she was

employed in the service of Vivian Byam Lewes, who worked in the chemical department at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich. On 4 August 1883, she married Richard Walter Keen in Woolwich.

Richard had been born in Barham, Suffolk, on 6 February 1859, the eldest child of Richard Brook Keen and Frances Baldwin. His younger siblings were Alfred, Robert, Catherine and Emma. Richard worked as a farm labourer before joining the West Suffolk Militia and the Royal Regiment of Artillery at Ipswich.

Richard and Pollie moved to Sialkot in September 1889 with the Royal Horse Artillery, in which he was collar maker sergeant. They lived in India with their growing family until April 1894. Their children were Dorothy Mary (1884-1978), Helen Mary (1885-89, died in Malta on their way to India), Eva Frances (1887-1985), Marjorie (1890-1971), Arthur Richard (1894-1966) and Edward Charles (1896-1900). Richard was discharged as medically unfit on 28 June 1895, and he died in Egham, Surrey, on 23 January 1910. Pollie died in Egham on 31 August 1955.

See BL, Mss Eur F528, Mary Caroline (née Holloway) and Richard Walter Keen collection.

Kendall

Franklin Richardson Kendall was born on 2 December 1839. The Kendalls (of Pelyn, near Lostwithiel) had a long and distinguished history of involvement in the navy; Franklin's great-grandfather was an Admiral and his grandfather was a Captain. Franklin's father, Lt. Edward Nicholas Kendall, sailed on a number of arctic expeditions, including one with John Franklin. (Franklin Richardson was probably named for him, and for another arctic explorer, John Richardson.) Edward also undertook surveying work on the west coast of Africa, in the South Atlantic and the Antarctic, and along the east coast of North America. After his retirement from the navy, Edward joined the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O), eventually becoming the company's Superintendent at Southampton.

Like his father, Franklin worked for the P&O, first at its head office in London (from 1856) and then in Bombay (from 1858). He also worked for the company in Australia for a period. In April 1867, he married Frances Margaret Fletcher. Her father was the Rev. W. K. Fletcher, senior chaplain of the Bombay presidency. In 1881, Franklin returned to work in London, retiring in 1906 as the Chief General Manager of the P&O. He died the following year on 23 December.

Franklin and Frances had six sons and one daughter. One of their sons, Sir Charles Henry Bayley Kendall, became a High Court Judge in India.

See Holland, Clive. 'Kendall, Edward Nicholas.' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 7 (University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2000) <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=3475>; and BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 60, Franklin Richardson Kendall.

Lyll

Alfred Comyn Lyll was born on 4 January 1835 at Coulsdon, Surrey. His father was the Rev. Alfred Lyll (1796-1865). Alfred Sr. was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. He published literary and philosophical works, and was a rector at Harbledown, Kent. Alfred Sr. was the son of John Lyll (1752-1805) of Findon, who worked in shipping, and Jane Camming (Comyn; d. 1867) of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Alfred Jr.'s mother was Mary Broadwood (c. 1812-1878), daughter of James T. Broadwood of Lyne, Sussex. The family was well-respected among the English social and business elite. An uncle, George Lyll, was chairman of the East India Company and a Member of Parliament for the City of London, while another uncle, William Rowe Lyll, was dean of Canterbury.

Alfred Jr. was raised at Godmersham and Harbledown, Kent, and was educated at Eton College. Through his uncle, he took a writership in the East India Company, and secured a patronage position at Haileybury. He arrived in Calcutta in early 1856, and he served in the civil service until 1887. His first appointment was as assistant magistrate of Bulandshahr district. He also participated in fighting during the Rebellion, earning the mutiny medal in the process. Later in his career, he also acted as Foreign Secretary for the Government of India and as Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces. His brother, Sir James Broadwood Lyll, was also in the Indian Civil Service, and served as Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab from 1887 to 1892.

While in England in 1861, Alfred met Cornelia Arnoldina (Cora) Cloete. Cora was from a Dutch Cape family, but had been in India during the Rebellion. Despite his parents' doubts, Alfred and Cora married on 12 November 1862.

After his retirement from India in 1887, Alfred served as a Member of the Council of India in England. He also wrote a number of essays on India, especially on Indian religions. He was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath and a Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire. He also had honorary degrees from Oxford (DCL) and Cambridge (LLD), and the first honorary

fellowship of King's College, Cambridge. He was a founding fellow of the British Academy, and served in a number of other capacities among the British social, cultural and literary elite. Alfred died on 10 April 1911, and was buried at Harbledown, Kent. He was survived by his wife and two sons (Frances Alfred and Robert Adolphus, Indian Army) and two daughters (Sophia Magdalene and Mary Evelina, the latter married to Sir John Ontario Miller of the Indian Civil Service).

See John F. Riddick, *Who Was Who in British India* (Westport: Greenwood, 1998), 222; Katherine Prior, 'Lyll, Sir Alfred Comyn (1835–1911),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34641>>; H. M. Chichester, 'Lyll, Alfred (1796–1865),' rev. C. A. Creffield, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17234>>; David Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste: Imperial Lives in the Victorian Raj* (London: John Murray, 2005); and BL, Mss Eur F132, Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall collection.

Portal

Sir Bertram Percy Portal (1866–1949, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, Distinguished Service Order) served with the 17th Lancers, and as aide-de-camp to Sir Arthur Havelock, the Governor of Madras. He later served in South Africa and in the First World War. His father was Sir Wyndham Spencer Portal, 1st baronet. His mother was Mary (née Hicks-Beach) Portal.

See BL, Mss Eur F494, Bertram Percy Portal collection.

Robinson

The Robinson siblings were born into a family with a long history in India. Their paternal grandfather was Sir George Abercrombie Robinson, first baronet (1758–1832), who served in the Bengal Army and held a number of influential positions, including as an East India Company Director. Their great-grandfather was John Robinson, who was a merchant in Calcutta.

Their father was the Rev. William Scott Robinson, who worked as the Rector of Dyrham, Gloucestershire, for forty-seven years. Although he did not have Indian experience himself, a number of his siblings and nephews did, especially in the Bengal army; others served in China. The siblings' mother was Matilda Maxwell (née Innes) Robinson. Her father, John Innes, was a Member of Parliament for a borough in Cornwall, though the family gossiped that her real biological father was the Duke of Gordon.

Five of the eleven Robinson siblings lived in India for a period. The eldest was Matilda Scott (Mattie, 1828–1869), whose husband and first cousin, Douglas

Robinson, served with the 72nd Highlanders in India. William Le Fleming (Willy, born 1830, later fourth baronet) worked in the Bengal Civil Service, as did his younger brother Henry Houlton (1834-62). Their brothers Major-General John Innes (born 1833-91) and Captain Jardine Scott (Jardy, 1840-68) were officers in the Bengal Cavalry. There were five sisters who stayed in Dyrham. These were Fanny Gordon (born 1836), Annie Smith (1838-1859), Clara Fraser (born 1842), Eliza Scott (1844-1924), and Sophia Jane Wemyss (born 1847). Margaret Isabella Robinson died at the age of three in 1834.

See BL, Mss Eur F142, Sir George Abercrombie Robinson.

Sconce

Captain Herbert Sconce served in the Bengal Army from 1854 to 1867, and also held civil positions in Saugor and Assam (1858-67). In 1859, he married Elizabeth Jane Fletcher, who had been born in Bombay. Her father appears to have been the Rev. William Kew Fletcher, Chaplain for the East India Company. Herbert died on 18 May 1867 in Suez, on his way to England from India.

His sister was Sarah Susanna (Sally) Bunbury, wife of Captain Richard Bunbury of the Royal Navy. Sally and Richard lived for a time in Australia, and he worked as an appointed magistrate there. They had moved to Australia with Sally and Herbert's brother, Robert Knox Sconce, and his wife, Elizabeth Catherine Repton (daughter of the Rev. Edward Repton, canon of Westminster and chaplain to the House of Commons). Robert and Elizabeth stayed in Australia longer than Sally and Richard; Robert also worked as a magistrate, but was later recruited as a clergyman, and worked as a schoolteacher for a time.

Herbert, Sally and Robert's father was Robert Clement Sconce (1788-1847), a purser in the Royal Navy and secretary to Admiral Sir John Duckworth. For a time, he was chief commissary of the navy at Malta, where Herbert was born. Robert Sr. appears to have been born in the West Indies. Sally published a book on him entitled *Life and Letters of Robert Clement Sconce*.

See Sarah Susanna Bunbury, *Life and Letters of Robert Clement Sconce* (London: Cox and Wyman, 1861); R. A. Daly, 'Sconce, Robert Knox (1818-1852),' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2006-2011) <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/sconce-robert-knox-2637>>; and BL, Mss Eur C492, Captain Herbert Sconce collection.

Sutcliffe

James Sutcliffe was Principal of the Hindu (later Presidency) College Calcutta from 1852 to 1876. He then served as Director of Public Instruction for Bengal until his death in 1878.

See BL, Mss Eur Photo Eur 232, James Sutcliffe collection.

White

George Stuart White was born on 6 July 1835 in northern Ireland. His father was James Robert White of Whitehall, county Antrim. His mother was Frances (née Stuart) White. The majority of George's education was at King William's College, Isle of Man, and at Sandhurst. He was commissioned ensign in the 27th Foot at the age of 18. He then left for India, serving first in the Rebellion.

George married Amelia Mary (Amy) Baly in 1874. Amy's father was Joseph Baly, archdeacon of Calcutta. They had four daughters and one son (James [Jack] Robert White). His son Jack would later become an army officer and revolutionary socialist, particularly active in Ireland but also elsewhere in Europe and around the world.

George had a distinguished military and political career over the decades that followed. He served in the Second Anglo-Afghan War, Upper Burma, the North-West and North-East Frontiers, Egypt and Natal. He was also Commander-in-Chief in India, was famous for defending Ladysmith (though his strategy was discredited among many military colleagues), and acted as Governor of Gibraltar and quartermaster-general at the War Office. Over his career, he was awarded the Victoria Cross and the Order of Merit, and was made a Knight Commander of the Order of Bath and a Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire. He also held honorary degrees from Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh and Dublin. Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White died on 24 June 1912, and was buried at Broughshane, county Antrim. His widow, Amy White, died in 1935.

See John F. Riddick, *Who Was Who in British India* (Westport: Greenwood, 1998), 386; F. B. Maurice, 'White, Sir George Stuart (1835–1912),' rev. James Lunt, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36860>>; Arthur Mitchell, 'White, James Robert (1879–1946),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65862>>.

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